SUPERMAN
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NATIONAL COMICS
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STRANGE ADVENTURES
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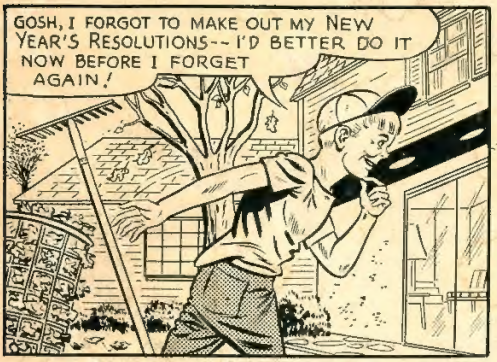
MAR. NO.150
"WHEN EARTH TURNED INTO A COMET!"
EXTRA! AN Atomic Knights STORY!

# SAFETY FIRST--ALL YEAR!



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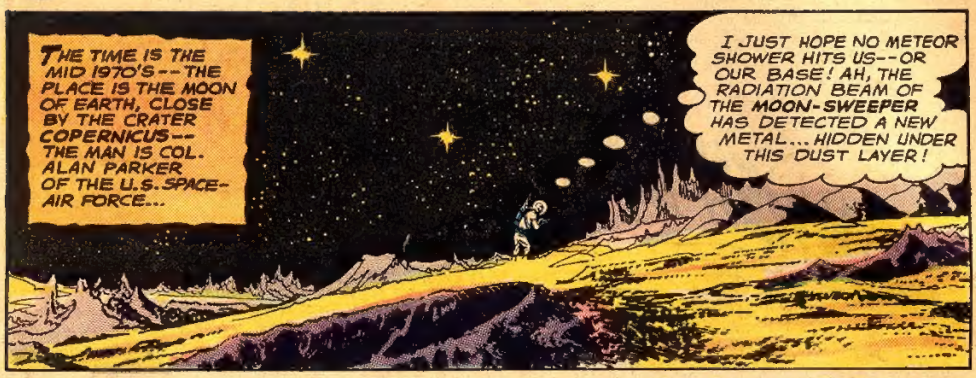
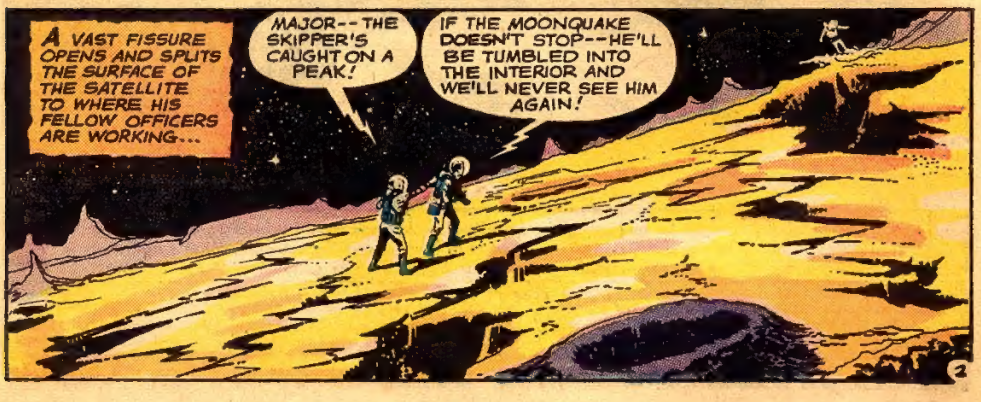

THE TIME IS THE MID 1970'S -- THE PLACE IS THE MOON OF EARTH, CLOSE BY THE CRATER COPERNICUS -- THE MAN IS COL. ALAN PARKER OF THE U.S. SPACE-AIR FORCE...
I JUST HOPE NO METEOR SHOWER HITS US -- OR OUR BASE! AH, THE RADIATION BEAM OF THE MOON-SWEEPER HAS DETECTED A NEW METAL... HIDDEN UNDER THIS DUST LAYER!

ON EARTH, AN ATMOSPHERE BURNS METEORS UP BEFORE THEY HIT, BUT HERE -- POW! WE WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE! JUST THINKING ABOUT IT ALMOST GIVES ME THE SHAKES!

AND SPEAKING OF THE SHAKES -- I HOPE WE DON'T GET ANY MOONQUAKES, EITHER! WE'VE SPOTTED A COUPLE AROUND THIS REGION OF COPERNICUS AND KNOW THEY CAN STRIKE AT ANY TIME!

EVEN AS COL. PARKER THINKS OF THE POSSIBILITY OF MOONQUAKES, THE GROUND LIFTS AND RIPPLES, QUIVERING LIKE JELLY...
YIII! IT'S HAPPENED!

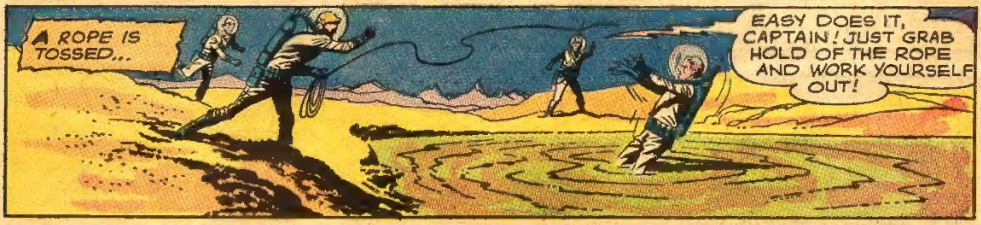

A VAST FISSURE OPENS AND SPLITS THE SURFACE OF THE SATELLITE TO WHERE HIS FELLOW OFFICERS ARE WORKING...
MAJOR -- THE SKIPPER'S CAUGHT ON A PEAK!
IF THE MOONQUAKE DOESN'T STOP -- HE'LL BE TUMBLED INTO THE INTERIOR AND WE'LL NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN!

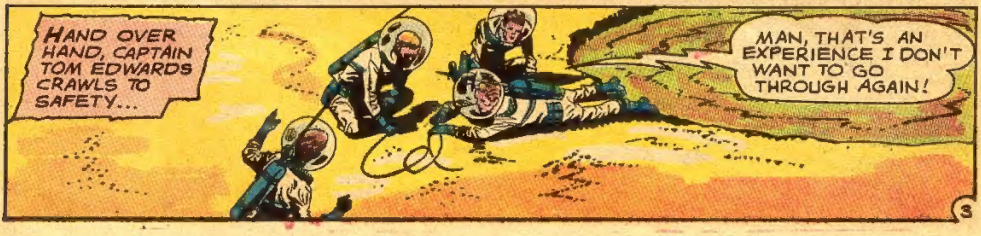
ON EVERY SIDE, YAWNING ABYSSES OPEN AS IF TO DEVOUR THE TRAPPED EARTHMAN...
JUMP, COLONEL!
JUMP, SIR! JUMP FOR YOUR LIFE!

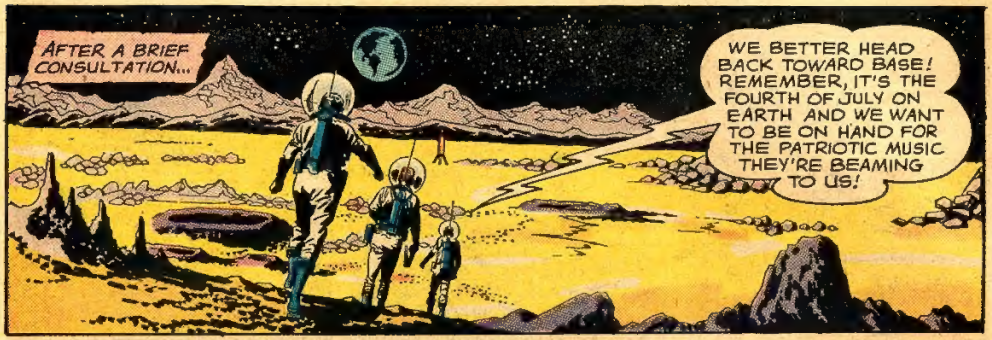
COLONEL PARKER TENSES HIS MUSCLES--THEN LEAPS UP AND OUTWARD...
BACK ON EARTH I'D NEVER MAKE THIS--BUT HERE ON THE MOON MY 170 EARTH-POUNDS WEIGH ONLY ABOUT 28 POUNDS, SO I CAN RUN FASTER AND JUMP FURTHER THAN I CAN BACK HOME!

EAGER HANDS REACH OUT TO REACH AND HOLD HIM...
THANKS, MEN! I'M FINE NOW! WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS--CAPTAIN EDWARDS, FOR INSTANCE? HE HASN'T CONTACTED US LATELY! HE MAY BE IN TROUBLE IN THAT QUICKSAND ZONE HE'S EXPLORING...
LISTEN!

SUDDENLY, THROUGH THEIR SPACE-HELMET RADIOS COMES A STARTLED CRY...
HELP! HELP! I'M CAUGHT IN QUICKSAND! SINKING FAST...
CHIN UP, EDWARDS! WE'RE ON OUR WAY!


A ROPE IS TOSSED...
EASY DOES IT, CAPTAIN! JUST GRAB HOLD OF THE ROPE AND WORK YOURSELF OUT!

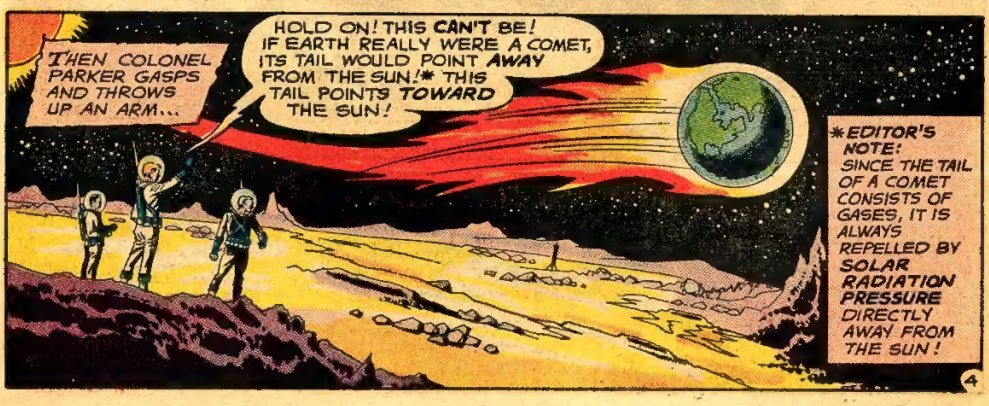

HAND OVER HAND, CAPTAIN TOM EDWARDS CRAWLS TO SAFETY...
MAN, THAT'S AN EXPERIENCE I DON'T WANT TO GO THROUGH AGAIN!

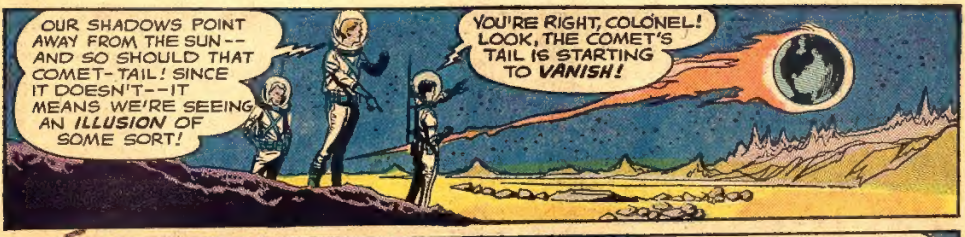

AFTER A BRIEF CONSULTATION...
WE BETTER HEAD BACK TOWARD BASE! REMEMBER, IT'S THE FOURTH OF JULY ON EARTH AND WE WANT TO BE ON HAND FOR THE PATRIOTIC MUSIC THEY'RE BEAMING TO US!

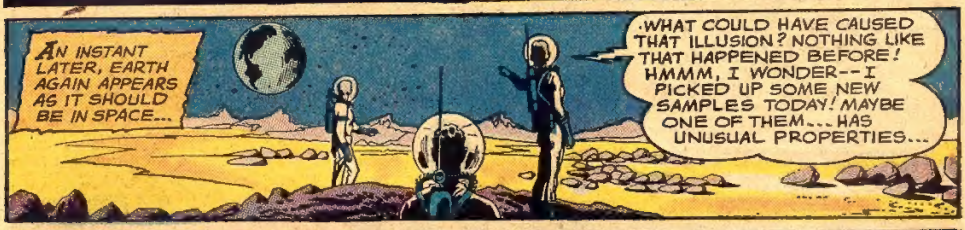
A GRIN LIGHTS UP ALAN PARKER'S FACE AS HE THINKS OF HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN 250,000 MILES AWAY...
WONDER HOW THE KIDS ARE CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAY? DID BILLY GET HIS SPARKLERS? DID TOMMY GET THE FIREWORKS HE WANTED? I HOPE MADGE IS ALL RIGHT. I SURE MISS THEM.

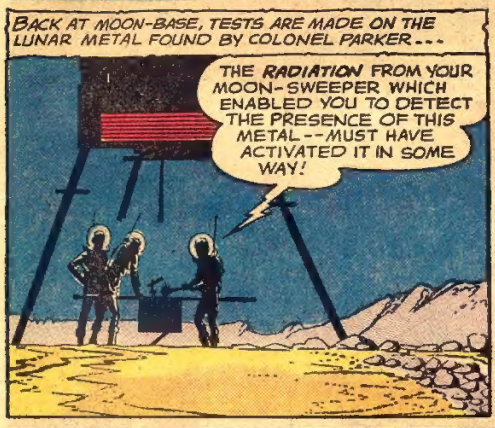
AS HIS EYES FASTEN ON THE PLANET EARTH WHILE HE THINKS OF HOME AND FAMILY, HE IS STARTLED BY...
HUH? AM I SEEING THINGS? EARTH IS-- TURNING INTO A COMET!

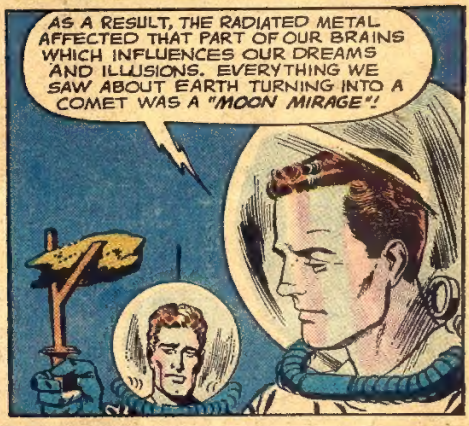
HURLING ITSELF OUT OF ORBIT-- GROWING A LUMINOUS TAIL -- THE LUNANAUTS' HOME WORLD HAS TURNED INTO A RUNAWAY COMET...


THEN COLONEL PARKER GASPS AND THROWS UP AN ARM...
HOLD ON! THIS CAN'T BE! IF EARTH REALLY WERE A COMET, ITS TAIL WOULD POINT AWAY FROM THE SUN!* THIS TAIL POINTS TOWARD THE SUN!
*EDITOR'S NOTE: SINCE THE TAIL OF A COMET CONSISTS OF GASES, IT IS ALWAYS REPELLED BY SOLAR RADIATION PRESSURE DIRECTLY AWAY FROM THE SUN!

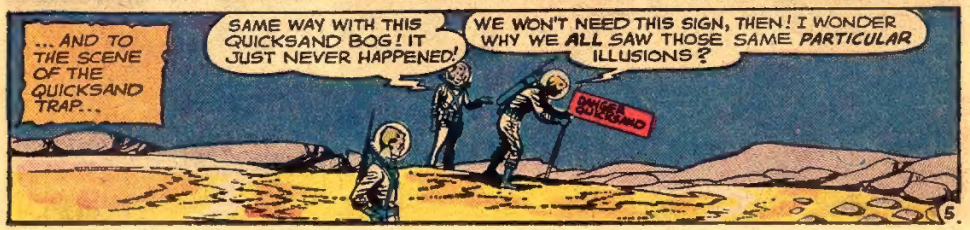

OUR SHADOWS POINT AWAY FROM THE SUN-- AND SO SHOULD THAT COMET-TAIL! SINCE IT DOESN'T--IT MEANS WE'RE SEEING AN ILLUSION OF SOME SORT!
YOU'RE RIGHT, COLONEL! LOOK, THE COMET'S TAIL IS STARTING TO VANISH!

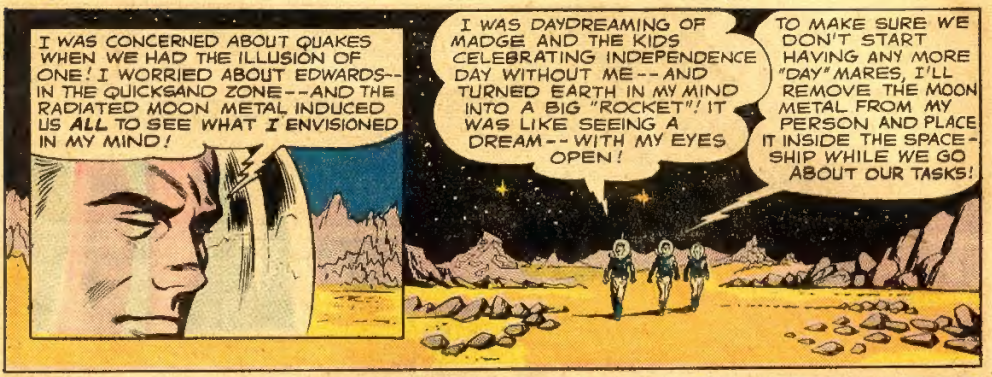

AN INSTANT LATER, EARTH AGAIN APPEARS AS IT SHOULD BE IN SPACE...
WHAT COULD HAVE CAUSED THAT ILLUSION? NOTHING LIKE THAT HAPPENED BEFORE! HMMM, I WONDER--I PICKED UP SOME NEW SAMPLES TODAY! MAYBE ONE OF THEM...HAS UNUSUAL PROPERTIES...

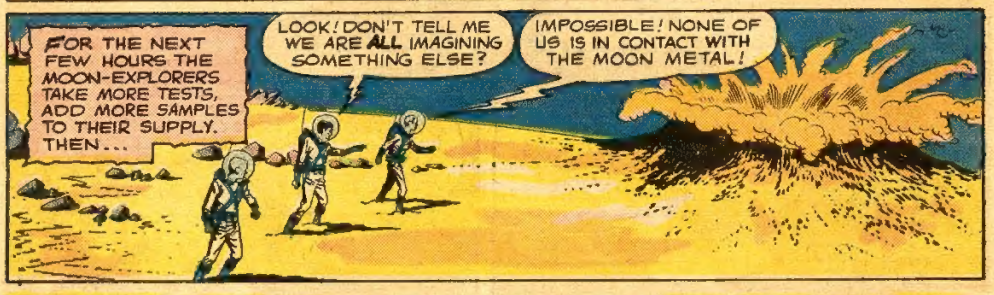

BACK AT MOON-BASE, TESTS ARE MADE ON THE LUNAR METAL FOUND BY COLONEL PARKER...
THE RADIATION FROM YOUR MOON-SWEEPER WHICH ENABLED YOU TO DETECT THE PRESENCE OF THIS METAL--MUST HAVE ACTIVATED IT IN SOME WAY!


AS A RESULT, THE RADIATED METAL AFFECTED THAT PART OF OUR BRAINS WHICH INFLUENCES OUR DREAMS AND ILLUSIONS. EVERYTHING WE SAW ABOUT EARTH TURNING INTO A COMET WAS A "MOON MIRAGE"!

DECIDING TO CHECK OUT THIS THEORY, COLONEL PARKER TRAVELS TO THE SITE OF THE MOONQUAKES...
LOOK, MAJOR! THERE ARE NO FISSURES HERE! THE MOON-QUAKE WAS ONLY AN HALLUCINATION INDUCED BY THE MOON METAL!

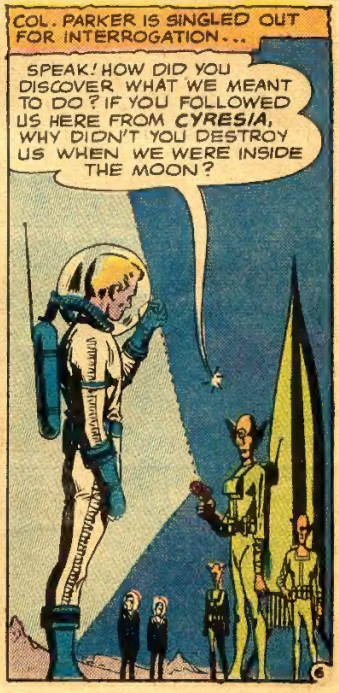

...AND TO THE SCENE OF THE QUICKSAND TRAP...
SAME WAY WITH THIS QUICKSAND BOG! IT JUST NEVER HAPPENED!
WE WON'T NEED THIS SIGN, THEN! I WONDER WHY WE ALL SAW THOSE SAME PARTICULAR ILLUSIONS?
DANGER QUICKSAND


I WAS CONCERNED ABOUT QUAKES WHEN WE HAD THE ILLUSION OF ONE! I WORRIED ABOUT EDWARDS--IN THE QUICKSAND ZONE--AND THE RADIATED MOON METAL INDUCED US ALL TO SEE WHAT I ENVISIONED IN MY MIND!
I WAS DAYDREAMING OF MADGE AND THE KIDS CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE DAY WITHOUT ME--AND TURNED EARTH IN MY MIND INTO A BIG "ROCKET"! IT WAS LIKE SEEING A DREAM--WITH MY EYES OPEN!
TO MAKE SURE WE DON'T START HAVING ANY MORE "DAY" MARES, I'LL REMOVE THE MOON METAL FROM MY PERSON AND PLACE IT INSIDE THE SPACE-SHIP WHILE WE GO ABOUT OUR TASKS!


FOR THE NEXT FEW HOURS THE MOON-EXPLORERS TAKE MORE TESTS, ADD MORE SAMPLES TO THEIR SUPPLY. THEN...
LOOK! DON'T TELL ME WE ARE ALL IMAGINING SOMETHING ELSE?
IMPOSSIBLE! NONE OF US IS IN CONTACT WITH THE MOON METAL!

THROUGH THE SPRAY OF MOON-DUST RISES AN ALIEN VESSEL AND FROM ITS METAL HULL A VOICE TELEPATHS AT THE STARING EARTHMEN...
OUR ENEMIES--THE HUMANS--HAVE FOLLOWED US TO THIS MOON!
THEY MUST KNOW ABOUT OUR PLAN TO DESTROY THEIR WORLD!

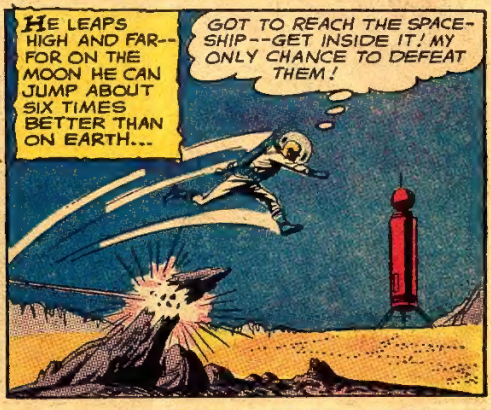
A BEAM OF RED LIGHT HITS THE MOON-EXPLORERS--GRIPS THEM IN ITS POWER--HOLDS THEM MOTIONLESS...
WHERE DID YOU LEARN OF OUR PLAN? WHO TOLD YOU?
WAIT! THE HUMANS CAN'T COMMUNICATE WHEN GRIPPED BY A RIGIBEAM! WE MUST FREE ONE OF THEM, QUESTION HIM!

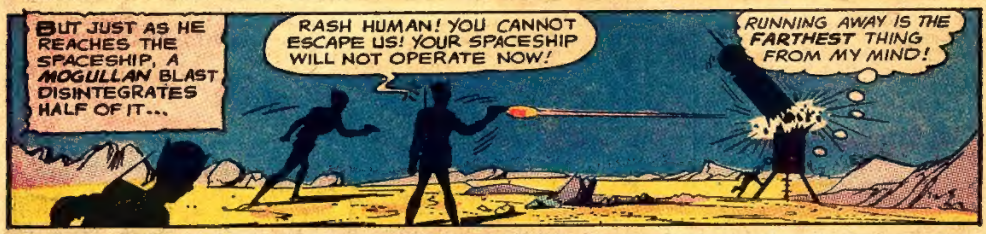

COL. PARKER IS SINGLED OUT FOR INTERROGATION...
SPEAK! HOW DID YOU DISCOVER WHAT WE MEANT TO DO? IF YOU FOLLOWED US HERE FROM CYRESIA, WHY DIDN'T YOU DESTROY US WHEN WE WERE INSIDE THE MOON?

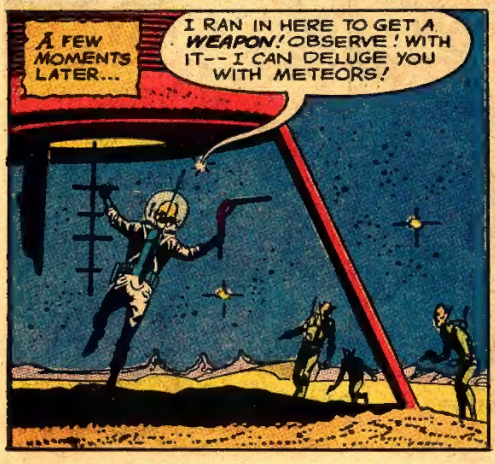
AS THE QUESTIONS CONTINUE, COLONEL PARKER FITS TOGETHER THE STRANGE STORY. FAR OFF IN SPACE, A WORLD OF HUMANS NAMED CYRESIA HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN A TERRIBLE WAR WITH THE ALIEN MOGULLANS...
NEITHER THE HUMANS NOR THE ALIENS COULD OVER-COME THE WEAPON-POWER OF THE OTHER--AND SO THE MOGULLANS CONCEIVED A PLAN TO TRAVEL TO ANOTHER STAR-SUN SYSTEM WHERE...
WE WILL PLANT A BOMB INSIDE THIS MOON--THEN HURL IT AT CYRESIA!
THE HUMANS ON CYRESIA WOULD FIRE AT THE MOON--DESTROYING IT--AND AT THE SAME TIME UNWITTINGLY DETONATE THE HIDDEN BOMB WHICH WOULD HIT THEIR PLANET AND...
THE QUESTIONS GO ON, ENDLESSLY, UNTIL COL. PARKER TELEPATHS HIS THOUGHTS TO THE ALIENS...
WHAT WE DEMAND TO KNOW IS, HOW DID YOU LEARN OF OUR SCHEME? DO YOU POSSESS A SPY-BEAM? WHY DIDN'T YOU DESTROY US? WHAT COUNTER-PLAN DO YOU HAVE?
I'M NO CYRESIAN! I'M FROM EARTH, THAT PLANET YOU SEE IN SPACE BEHIND YOU!
AS THE ALIEN TURNS TO LOOK AT EARTH, ALAN PARKER LEAPS FORWARD, WRESTING THE WEAPON FROM THE MOGULLAN...
THERE! NOW MAYBE I'LL BE ABLE TO FREE MY COMPANIONS!
RELEASE MY COMPANIONS THE SAME WAY YOU RELEASED ME! OR--I'LL BLAST YOU!
FOOL! DO YOU THINK WE WOULD CARRY AROUND A WEAPON CAPABLE OF HURTING OUR-SELVES? TRY TO SHOOT US! IT WILL DO YOU NO GOOD!

COLONEL PARKER TRIGGERS THE ALIEN WEAPON--BUT IT HAS NO EFFECT ON THE MOGULLANS...
THEY'RE RIGHT! IT DOESN'T BOTHER THEM! I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY--TRY TO THINK OF SOMETHING ELSE!

DROPPING THE BEAMER, HE TURNS AND RUNS SO SWIFTLY, DUE TO THE LOW GRAVITY OF THE MOON, THAT THE ALIENS MISS AGAIN AND AGAIN...
WE HAVE NO WEAPONS! THIS IS A PEACEFUL EXPEDITION TO THE MOON! BUT WITHOUT A WEAPON--HOW CAN I POSSIBLY STOP THEM?


HE LEAPS HIGH AND FAR--FOR ON THE MOON HE CAN JUMP ABOUT SIX TIMES BETTER THAN ON EARTH...
GOT TO REACH THE SPACE-SHIP--GET INSIDE IT! MY ONLY CHANCE TO DEFEAT THEM!


BUT JUST AS HE REACHES THE SPACESHIP, A MOGULLAN BLAST DISINTEGRATES HALF OF IT...
RASH HUMAN! YOU CANNOT ESCAPE US! YOUR SPACESHIP WILL NOT OPERATE NOW!
RUNNING AWAY IS THE FARTHEST THING FROM MY MIND!


A FEW MOMENTS LATER...
I RAN IN HERE TO GET A WEAPON! OBSERVE! WITH IT--I CAN DELUGE YOU WITH METEORS!

THE STARTLED ALIENS ARE TERRIFIED TO SEE A SHOWER OF GIGANTIC METEORS HURTLING DOWN ON THEM...
IF THEY HIT US--THEY'LL CRUSH US FLAT!

THEY DON'T REALIZE THOSE METEORS ARE **ILLUSIONS** CAUSED BY THE CHUNK OF MOON METAL I HOLD IN MY HAND AS I **THINK** ABOUT METEORS RAINING DOWN ON THIS PART OF THE MOON!

WE SURRENDER!

DROPPING THEIR WEAPONS IN OBEDIENCE TO HIS COMMAND, THE ALIENS ARE QUICKLY IMPRISONED...

THE PRISON I JUST "BUILT" WITH THE **MOON-SWEEPER** IS ALSO AN **ILLUSION**--BUT IF THE **MOGULLANS BELIEVE** THEY'RE IN JAIL, IT'S AS GOOD AS THE **REAL** THING!

USING THE ALIEN WEAPON, HE FREES HIS FELLOW OFFICERS, FROM THE EFFECT OF THE **RIGIBEAM**...

I WATCHED HOW THE ALIENS FREED ME; I CAN FREE THE OTHERS THE SAME WAY!

OUR FELLOW-HUMANS ON **CYRESIA** MAY NEVER KNOW IT--BUT WE SAVED THEIR PLANET FROM DESTRUCTION!

MAYBE SOMEDAY WE CAN GO THERE--IN A SHIP LIKE THIS OF THE ALIENS--AND TELL THEM ALL ABOUT IT!

THE END!

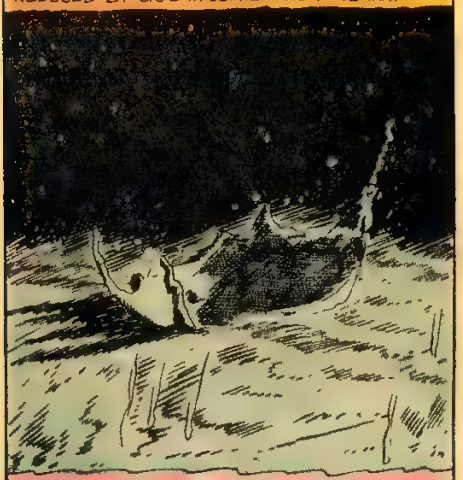
For The VERY BEST

SUPERMAN DC NATIONAL COMICS

in COMICS READING

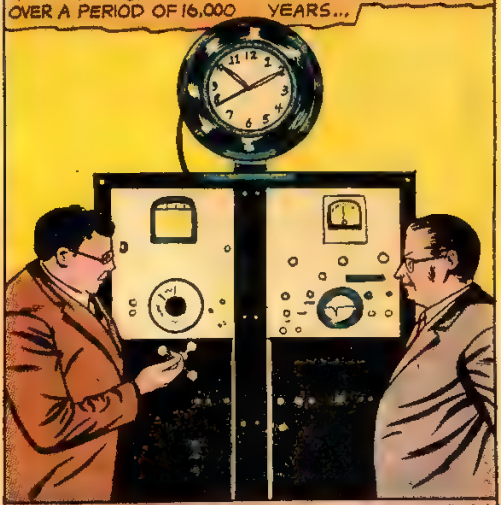
# AMAZING RATIOS!

THE EROSIVE PROCESS OF RAIN WATER CAUSES THE HEIGHT OF THE EARTH'S CONTINENTS TO BE REDUCED BY 0.02 MILLIMETERS A YEAR..



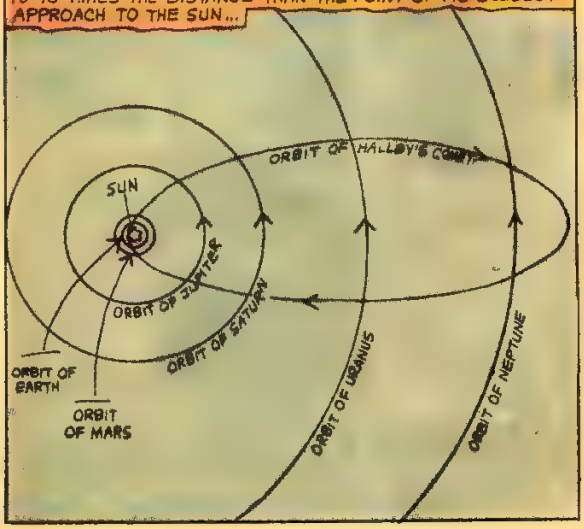
MAGNIFIED PHOTO SHOWS HOW FORCE OF FALLING RAINDROP CAUSED SOIL PARTICLES TO BE SPLASHED UPWARD

BY USING THE MOTIONS OF **CESIUM ATOMS** AS THE FREQUENCY ELEMENT IN A CLOCK, THE TIMEPIECE WILL NOT LOSE OR GAIN MORE THAN ONE SECOND OVER A PERIOD OF 16,000 YEARS...



**ATOMIC CLOCK** DEVELOPED BY U.S. NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS

AT ITS FURTHEST POINT FROM THE SUN, **HALLEY'S COMET** IS 70 TIMES THE DISTANCE THAN THE POINT OF ITS CLOSEST APPROACH TO THE SUN...




THE DIAMETER OF A BLOOD CAPILLARY --THE CONNECTING LINK BETWEEN AN ARTERY AND VEIN--IS ABOUT 50 TIMES THINNER THAN THE THINNEST HUMAN HAIR..

THE WALL OF A CAPILLARY IS ONE-CELL THICK

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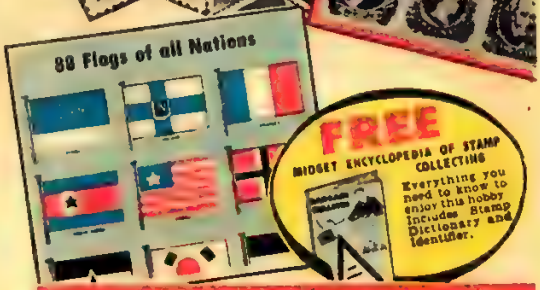


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# The Atomic Knights

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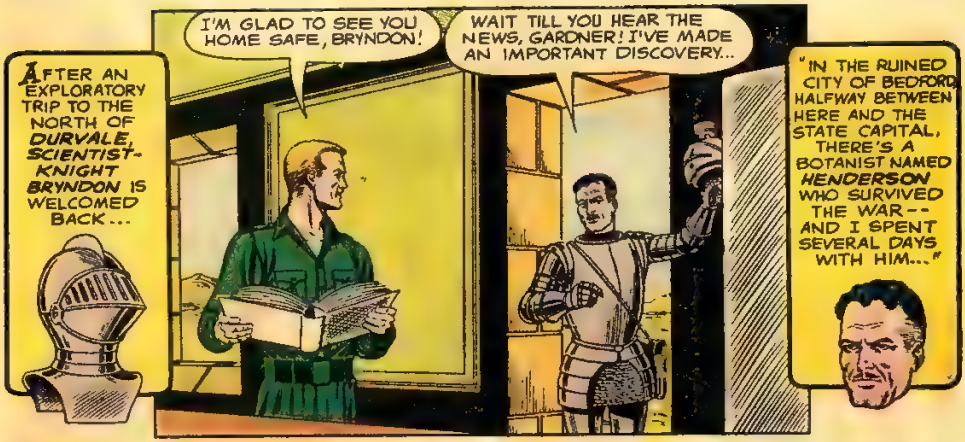
**DOUGLAS HERALD**-- SCHOOLTEACHER

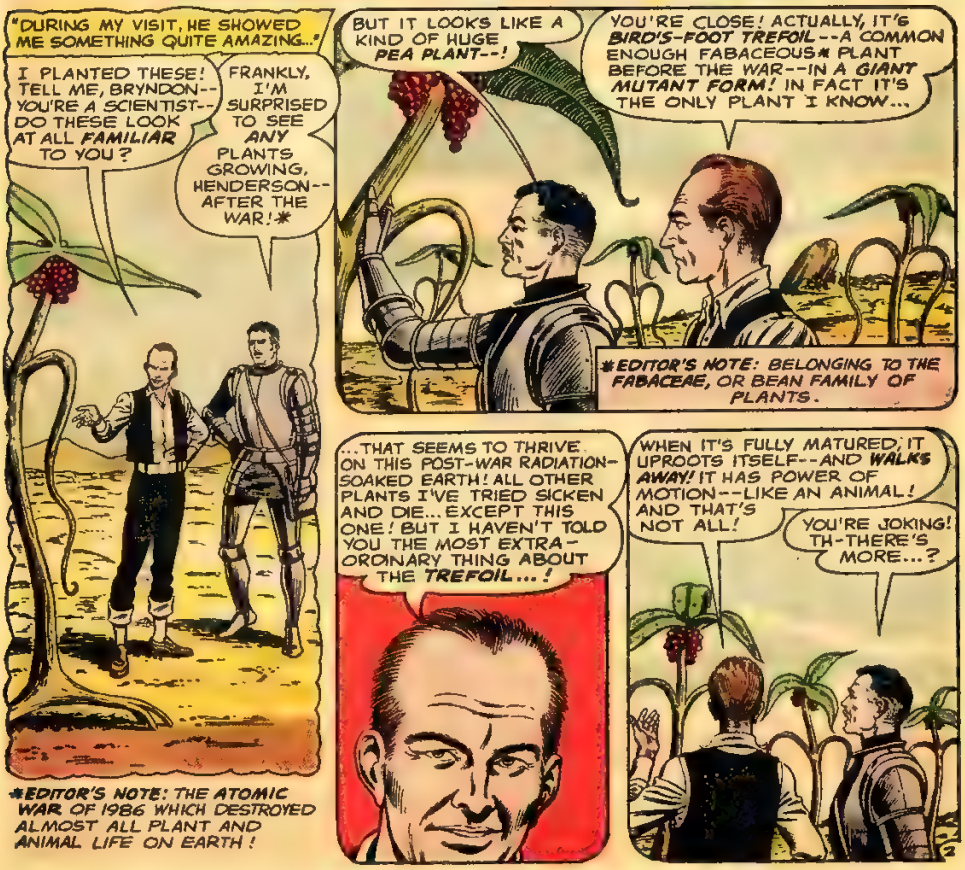
**MARLENE**-- HERALD'S SISTER

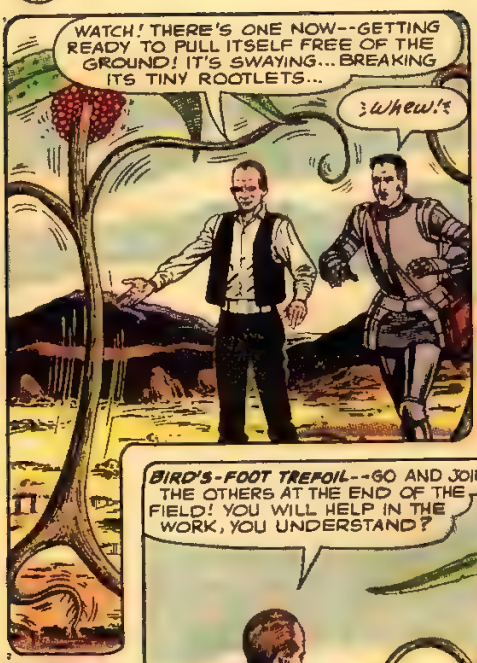
**BRYNDON**--ONE OF THE LAST SCIENTISTS LEFT ALIVE ON EARTH

**WAYNE + HOLLIS HOBARD**-- BROTHERS, EX-SOLDIERS AND LOYAL **ATOMIC KNIGHTS**

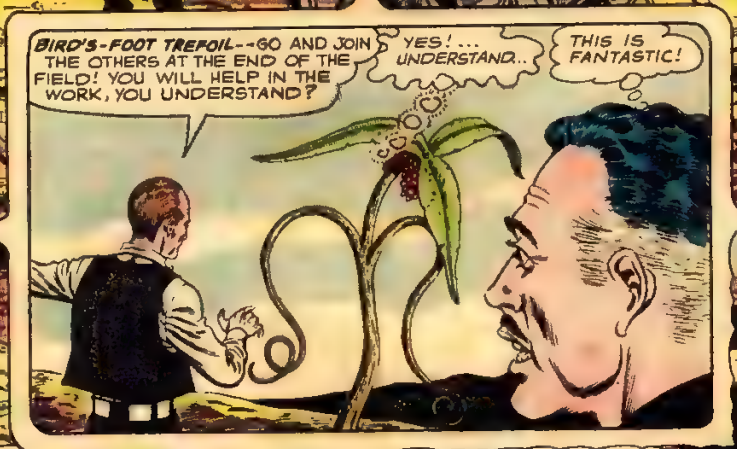
# THE PLANT THAT HATED HUMANS!

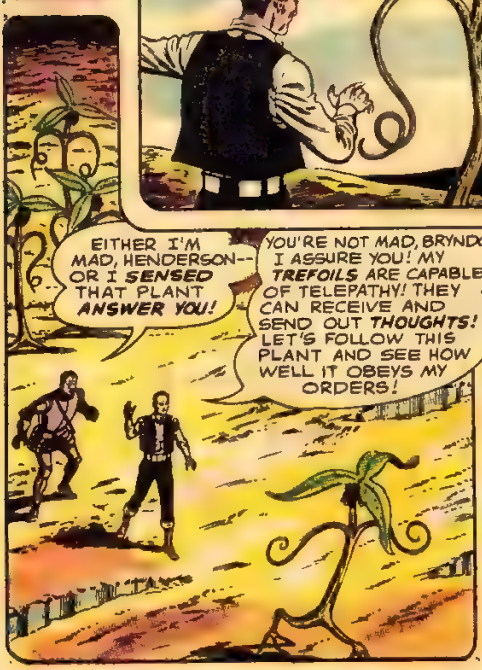

AFTER AN EXPLORATORY TRIP TO THE NORTH OF DURVALE, SCIENTIST-KNIGHT BRYNDON IS WELCOMED BACK...
I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU HOME SAFE, BRYNDON!
WAIT TILL YOU HEAR THE NEWS, GARDNER! I'VE MADE AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY...
"IN THE RUINED CITY OF BEDFORD HALFWAY BETWEEN HERE AND THE STATE CAPITAL, THERE'S A BOTANIST NAMED HENDERSON WHO SURVIVED THE WAR--AND I SPENT SEVERAL DAYS WITH HIM..."

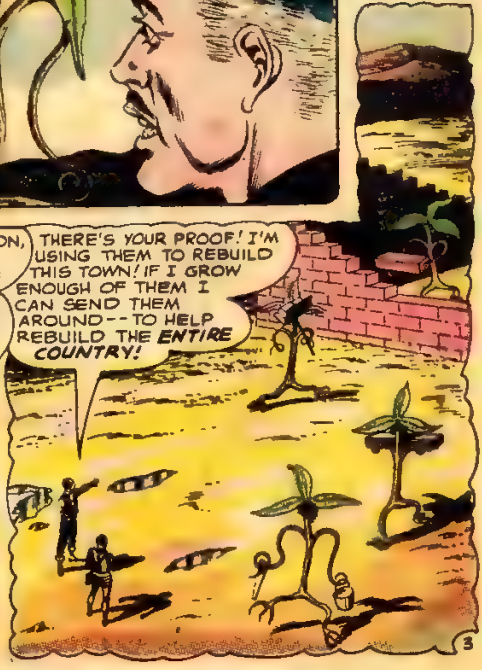

"DURING MY VISIT, HE SHOWED ME SOMETHING QUITE AMAZING..."
I PLANTED THESE! TELL ME, BRYNDON--YOU'RE A SCIENTIST--DO THESE LOOK AT ALL FAMILIAR TO YOU?
FRANKLY, I'M SURPRISED TO SEE ANY PLANTS GROWING, HENDERSON--AFTER THE WAR!*
*EDITOR'S NOTE: THE ATOMIC WAR OF 1986 WHICH DESTROYED ALMOST ALL PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE ON EARTH!
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE A KIND OF HUGE PEA PLANT--!
YOU'RE CLOSE! ACTUALLY, IT'S BIRD'S-FOOT TREFOIL--A COMMON ENOUGH FABACEOUS* PLANT BEFORE THE WAR--IN A GIANT MUTANT FORM! IN FACT IT'S THE ONLY PLANT I KNOW...
*EDITOR'S NOTE: BELONGING TO THE FABACEAE, OR BEAN FAMILY OF PLANTS.
...THAT SEEMS TO THRIVE ON THIS POST-WAR RADIATION-SOAKED EARTH! ALL OTHER PLANTS I'VE TRIED SICKEN AND DIE... EXCEPT THIS ONE! BUT I HAVEN'T TOLD YOU THE MOST EXTRA-ORDINARY THING ABOUT THE TREFOIL...!
WHEN IT'S FULLY MATURED, IT UPROOTS ITSELF--AND WALKS AWAY! IT HAS POWER OF MOTION--LIKE AN ANIMAL! AND THAT'S NOT ALL!
YOU'RE JOKING! TH-THERE'S MORE...?

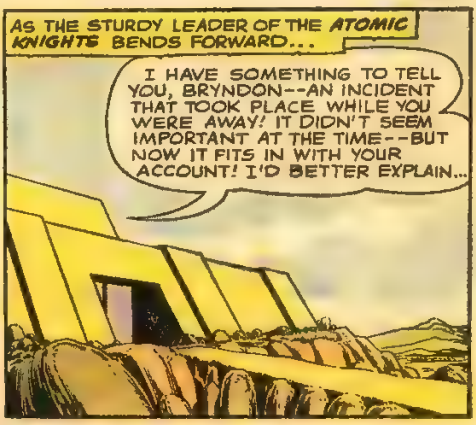

WATCH! THERE'S ONE NOW--GETTING READY TO PULL ITSELF FREE OF THE GROUND! IT'S SWAYING... BREAKING ITS TINY ROOTLETS...
Whew!

IT'S LOOSE--STEPPING AWAY! BUT TAKE CAREFUL NOTE OF WHAT HAPPENS NOW! I'VE SAVED THIS FOR THE BIG SURPRISE--


BIRD'S-FOOT TREFOIL--GO AND JOIN THE OTHERS AT THE END OF THE FIELD! YOU WILL HELP IN THE WORK, YOU UNDERSTAND?
YES!... UNDERSTAND...
THIS IS FANTASTIC!

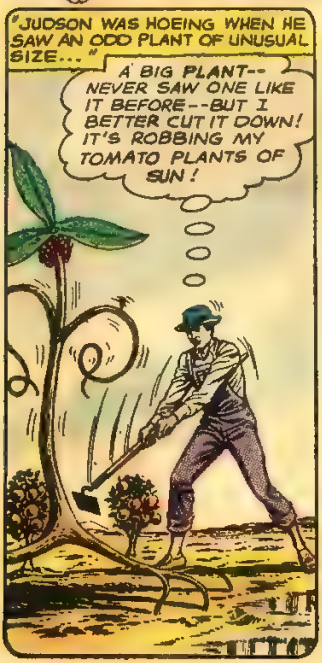

EITHER I'M MAD, HENDERSON--OR I SENSED THAT PLANT ANSWER YOU!
YOU'RE NOT MAD, BRYNDON, I ASSURE YOU! MY TREFOILS ARE CAPABLE OF TELEPATHY! THEY CAN RECEIVE AND SEND OUT THOUGHTS! LET'S FOLLOW THIS PLANT AND SEE HOW WELL IT OBEYS MY ORDERS!

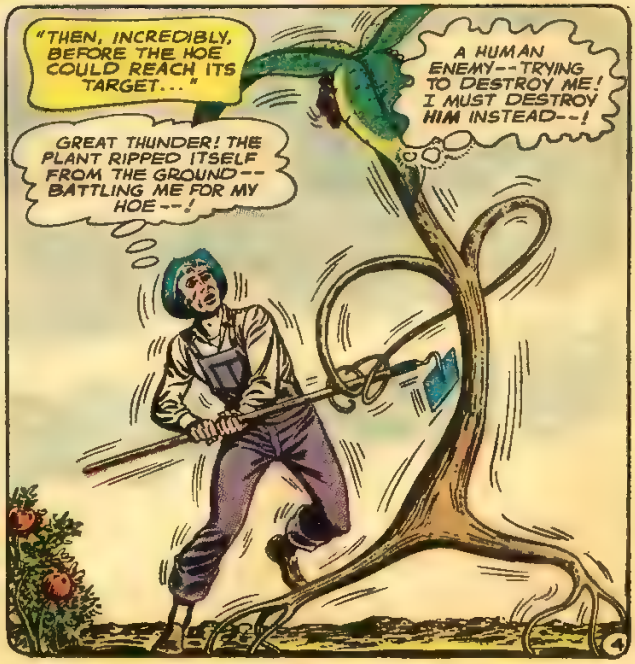

THERE'S YOUR PROOF! I'M USING THEM TO REBUILD THIS TOWN! IF I GROW ENOUGH OF THEM I CAN SEND THEM AROUND--TO HELP REBUILD THE ENTIRE COUNTRY!

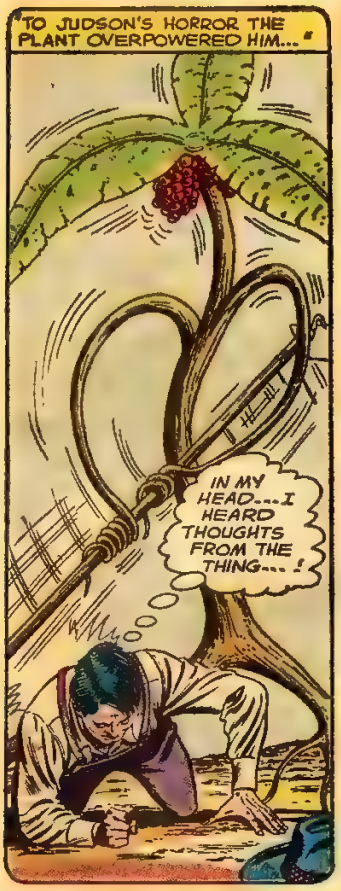


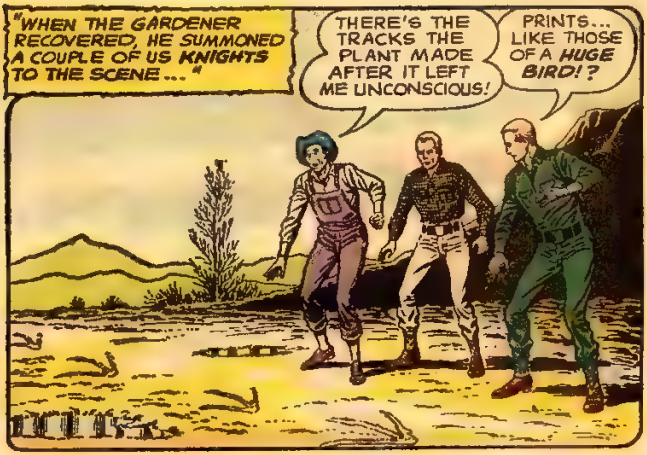

"A FEW DAYS AGO, ALVA JUDSON WAS WORKING IN OUR VEGETABLE FIELD* ON THE EDGE OF TOWN..."

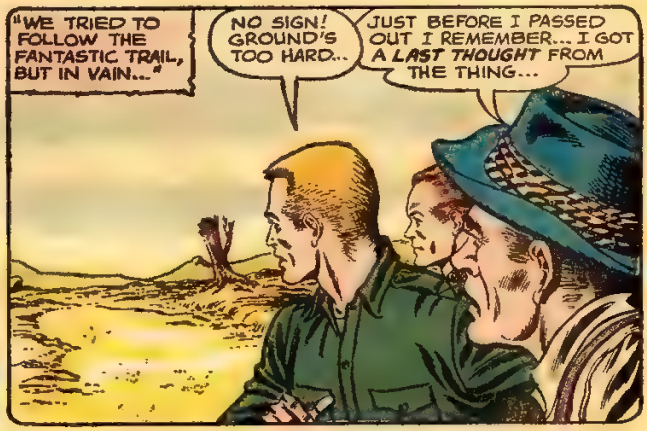
*EDITOR'S NOTE: FOR THE ORIGINS OF THE ATOMIC KNIGHTS' VEGETABLE GARDENS IN DURVALE SEE PREVIOUS STORIES OF THIS SERIES.

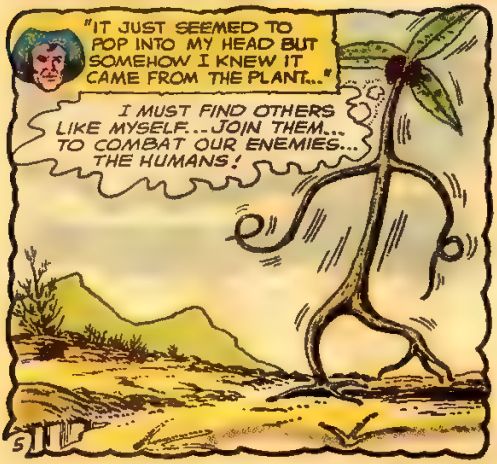


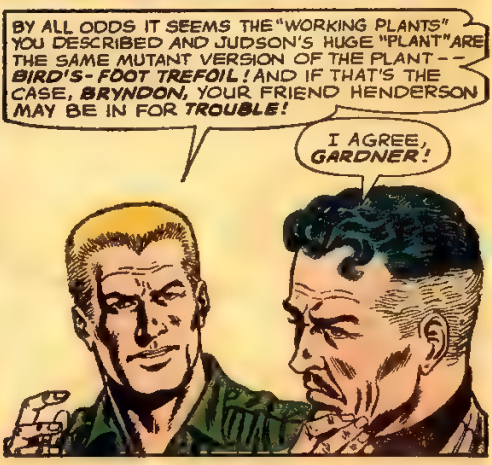



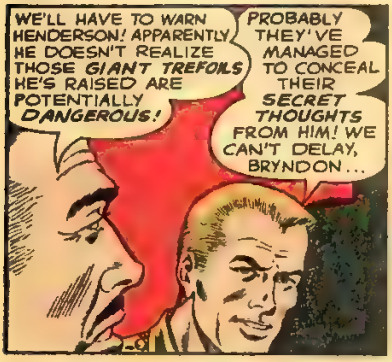

TO JUDSON'S HORROR THE PLANT OVERPOWERED HIM..."
IN MY HEAD...I HEARD THOUGHTS FROM THE THING...!

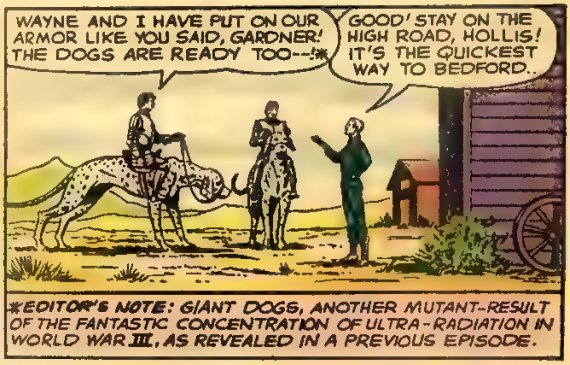

"WHEN THE GARDENER RECOVERED, HE SUMMONED A COUPLE OF US KNIGHTS TO THE SCENE..."
THERE'S THE TRACKS THE PLANT MADE AFTER IT LEFT ME UNCONSCIOUS!
PRINTS... LIKE THOSE OF A HUGE BIRD!?

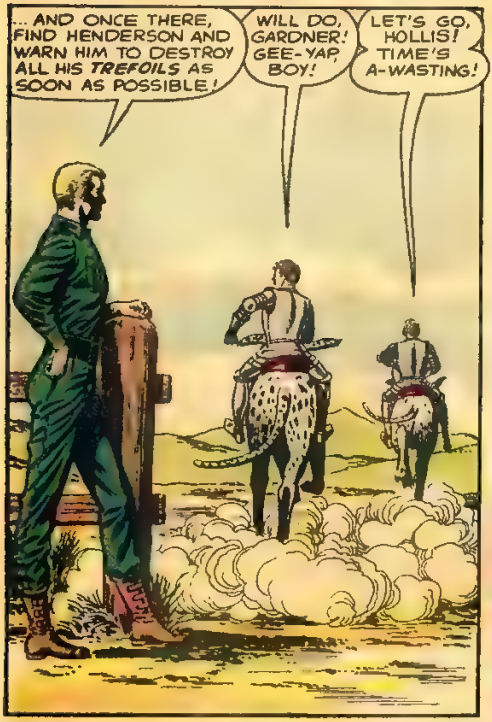

"WE TRIED TO FOLLOW THE FANTASTIC TRAIL, BUT IN VAIN..."
NO SIGN! GROUND'S TOO HARD...
JUST BEFORE I PASSED OUT I REMEMBER... I GOT A LAST THOUGHT FROM THE THING...


"IT JUST SEEMED TO POP INTO MY HEAD BUT SOMEHOW I KNEW IT CAME FROM THE PLANT..."
I MUST FIND OTHERS LIKE MYSELF...JOIN THEM... TO COMBAT OUR ENEMIES... THE HUMANS!


BY ALL ODDS IT SEEMS THE "WORKING PLANTS" YOU DESCRIBED AND JUDSON'S HUGE "PLANT" ARE THE SAME MUTANT VERSION OF THE PLANT -- BIRD'S-FOOT TREFOIL! AND IF THAT'S THE CASE, BRYNDON, YOUR FRIEND HENDERSON MAY BE IN FOR TROUBLE!
I AGREE, GARDNER!

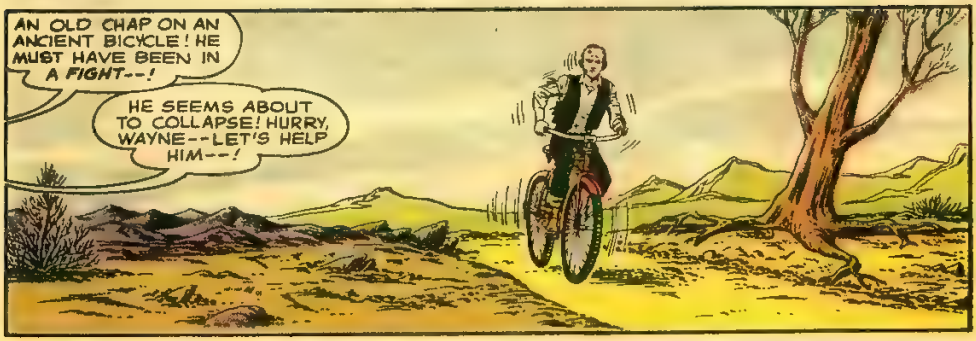

WE'LL HAVE TO WARN HENDERSON! APPARENTLY HE DOESN'T REALIZE THOSE GIANT TREFOILS HE'S RAISED ARE POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS!
PROBABLY THEY'VE MANAGED TO CONCEAL THEIR SECRET THOUGHTS FROM HIM! WE CAN'T DELAY, BRYNDON...

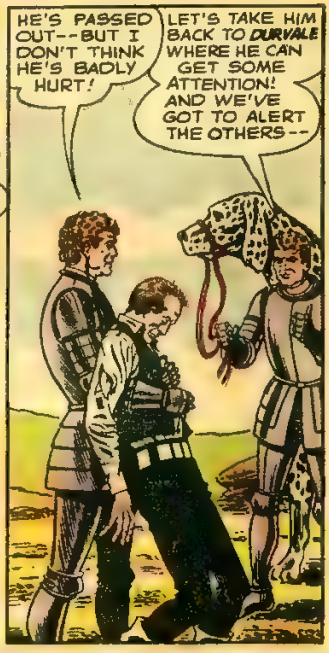

WAYNE AND I HAVE PUT ON OUR ARMOR LIKE YOU SAID, GARDNER! THE DOGS ARE READY TOO--!*
GOOD! STAY ON THE HIGH ROAD, HOLLIS! IT'S THE QUICKEST WAY TO BEDFORD..
*EDITOR'S NOTE: GIANT DOGS, ANOTHER MUTANT-RESULT OF THE FANTASTIC CONCENTRATION OF ULTRA-RADIATION IN WORLD WAR III, AS REVEALED IN A PREVIOUS EPISODE.

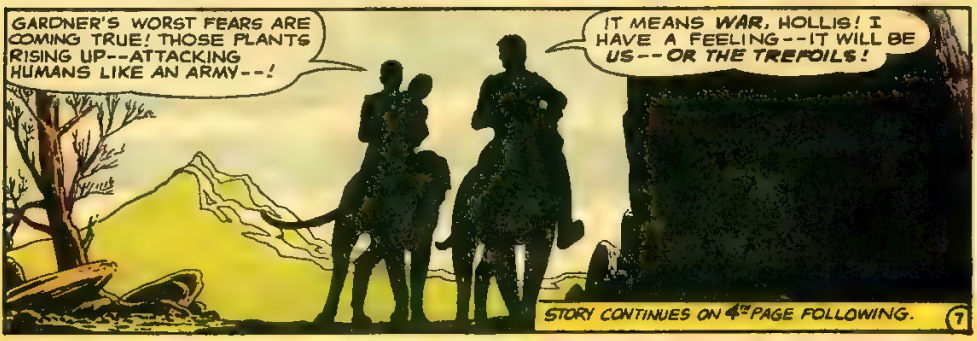

...AND ONCE THERE, FIND HENDERSON AND WARN HIM TO DESTROY ALL HIS TREFOILS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!
WILL DO, GARDNER! GEE-YAP, BOY!
LET'S GO, HOLLIS! TIME'S A-WASTING!

AS THE TWO DOUGHTY HOBARD BROTHERS GO PELL-MELL ON THEIR MISSION...
HOLLIS, SUPPOSE HENDERSON WON'T LISTEN TO US-- REFUSES TO DESTROY THOSE WORKER-PLANTS HE'S USING?
IN THAT CASE, WAYNE, WE'LL DO THE DESTROYING!

ACCORDING TO WHAT BRYNDON AND GARDNER SAID, THOSE TREFOILS CAN BE A MENACE-- AND IT'S UP TO US TO--
WAYNE, LOOK! SOMEONE COMING--!

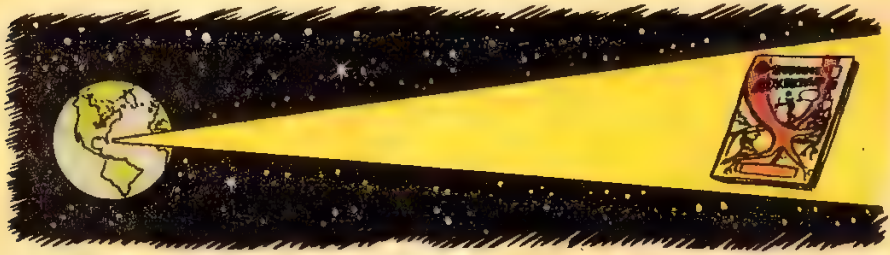





STORY CONTINUES ON 4TH PAGE FOLLOWING.

# SPOTLIGHT ON STRANGE ADVENTURES



Dear Editor: The November *Strange Adventures* turned out to be as interesting as a sci-fi comic could be. "Perilous Pet of Space" was quite unique, and your writer and artist deserve some real compliments. I like the idea of guessing at the identity of your writers-artists, and it looked to me that Gil Kane pencilled this great story, with Murphy Anderson doing the inking.

Mr. Kane, of all your artists, has what seems to me to be very definite characteristics. The picture of the alien with the "puffy cheeks" often comes up in Kane artwork, as well as the "I just figured it out" hand-smacking scene at the bottom of page 6. Also, the scene at the end of page 8 is typical of Mr. Kane, and I'll be really amazed if someone else pencilled it.

"Secret Invasion of Earth," an obvious Carmine Infantino-Murphy Anderson collaboration, was a real gem. The way your writer (most probably Gardner Fox) developed the story was really something. I write myself, and I know that one of the toughest things in making a story after you have an idea, is to develop it in a logical way, inserting the main and sub-characters logically, too.

"Case of the Robot Counter-Spy" was great for sci-fi relief, giving us a chance to ease our brains and enjoy the pleasant artwork of Mike Sekowsky and Bernie Sachs. The way the plot developed seemed almost too good to be true. One second *Ilda* is in a pawn shop, and in the next moment we find her in the midst of a spy case, along with her boss who just "happened" to be on the same case. Your author—Gardner Fox?—hit the jackpot with this one.

Steve Stern, 77 Evans Ave., Oceanside, N. Y.
(*For the benefit of the many readers who played the game of "Author, Author!—Artist, Artist!" here are the credits for the stories in the November issue: "Perilous Pet of Space," written by Gardner Fox, pencil illustrations by Gil Kane, inks by Murphy Anderson; "Secret Invasion of Earth," scripted by Gardner Fox, pencilled by Carmine Infantino, inked by Murphy Anderson; "Case of the Robot Counter-Spy" authored by John Broome, pencils by Mike Sekowsky and inks by Bernie Sachs. Reader Stern's comments on* Star Hawkins *has given us a convenient opening for the presenting of a lively discussion of this series, which follows in the next few letters.*—Editor)

* * *

Dear Editor: I can't understand why readers don't like *Star Hawkins*. Whereas most readers prefer the *Atomic Knights* series to all others, I don't see anything in them. *Star Hawkins* is easily my favorite. He's the most original character ever to hit comics. He is not as fantastic as some heroes. He's HUMAN! I mean he's not so devoted to fighting crime, or worrying about the welfare of man that he doesn't have time to worry about his financial standing, or have girl friends. These characteristics are a rarity in comics.

Doug Storer, 2019 Utah Ave., Butte, Mont.
(*Now that we've sampled a positive reaction, let's go negative.*—Editor)

* * *

Dear Editor: The *Star Hawkins* story, "Case of the Robot Counter-Spy," wins the honor of being, hands down, the worst story in a long, long while. The theme of the hero turning evil, only to be revealed in the end as a heroic counter-spy or hoaxer-for-a-purpose, is one of the biggest cliches in comics. *Ilda's* dimwittedness (witness her "Why is he trying to swat me flat?" when the crooks belt her) makes her eventual quick-thinking heroism glaringly unlikely. To make things even worse, the Sekowsky art is getting worse.

Paul Gambaccini.
8 Elizabeth Dr., Westport, Conn.
(*This double-negative report—story-wise and art-wise—is negated in the next letter coming up.*—Editor)

* * *

Dear Editor: I've been a reader of your comics for over eight years and I believe I know when your comics are good or bad. Ever since you started the *Star Hawkins* series, I've thought it is one of the most original you've ever produced.

The character I love best in this series is *Ilda;* I especially like the understatements and clever situations you put this she-robot in. In "Case of the Robot Counter-Spy," when you put her in a pawn shop where she feels sorry for her boss and herself and then give her that female trait of jealousy, only to explain that she's in there be-

cause her boss needs money, it gives it a real flair.

What I mean by understatements can be seen in the panel in which *Ilda* is hit in the back of the head and the criminal thinks to himself, "These Earth robots are sure made tough, just one more sock!" Whereupon *Ilda* thinks, "Did something fall on me," combine to make it really funny. That alone would not have made me laugh but when the artist draws *Ilda's* head vibrating like a bell, I have to give way.

Another thing I like is that *Star Hawkins* is always poor and not a rich detective. I think that it would be a mistake not to let *Ilda* and *Star Hawkins* continue in this fine series.

Lee Greathouse,
10711 Old Taylorsville Rd., Jeffersontown, Ky.
(*From our editorial seat, it seems to us that* Star Hawkins—*along with the irrepressible* Ilda—*are coming up fast in our series-race and are threatening to nose out one of the others!*—Editor)

* * *

Dear Editor: I haven't read many *Strange Adventures* lately but you can be sure I will as often as possible. I used to be on a "space" kick when I was younger and since reading your November issue, I'm positive I will be again.

As far as I'm concerned, the best story in this issue was "Perilous Pet of Space." The quality and ingenuity with which it was worked out only proves the greatness of a creative mind and a true artist. The only way possible for Earth to save itself was love—pure and simple. I must admit that I had an inkling to the answer before I got to the end though. It was the only way that anyone could get near *Kanar*.

The rest of the magazine was carried out in terrific style, although I can't help but feel sorry for *Ilda* who is always being, excuse the expression, "pawned off" for *Star Hawkins'* spending money. She is so fond of her boss, she'd do almost anything for him.

"The Secret Invasion of Earth" was a good story too. I liked the way the tables were turned on the villainous *Zaga Avar* and how his own invention was used against him.

Thanks loads for a wonderful magazine. Though I'm not as good at words as some of your readers are I enjoyed it just as much as they did.

Rosemary Guthrie,
1222 W. Randolph, Endi. Okla.
(*We're glad to note that you intend reading* Strange Adventures *regularly from now on. Too often, in and out readers learn that they have missed* out *on a terrific yarn—and then complain they can't find that particular back issue!*—Editor)

* * *

Dear Editor: After reading your editorial following Richard West's letter in the November issue, I knew I had an impression about it— an impression strong enough to warrant writing a letter. Talk about your thought-provoking comments! Basic honesty orders me to relate to you that you are, and will no doubt always be absolutely right.

I thought about some shoddy thinking I'd been doing—being a little jealous of readers who had been getting one letter after another printed in your department (while I have written several to no avail).

You stated that the "vast majority of letters received were unprintable"! Now we can believe this because, after all, the vast majority of your readership are minors. I'll bet most of your best critics are out of High School, at least. To explain why readers like Richard West (and I might as well add Paul Seydor) have the uncanny luck to have published an over-average number of letters, I offer that evidently they have their heart and soul in what they write about. They must honestly enjoy reading and writing about comics, and have no ulterior motives (like, "print my letter to prove the column isn't fixed") other than that of promoting the magazine!

If this sounds like *I'm* throwing in the towel, allow me to make it more clear. Your critical editorial presents a rather interesting challenge to me. I know that's the effect you hoped it would have—on *all* your readers!

James Morrison, 315 Blaine Ave., Marion, Ohio
(*In general, our hard-hitting editorial has upped the quality of our correspondence. However, one of our "hard-hit" critics struck back, as per the next letter.*—Editor)

* * *

Dear Editor: Undoubtedly, the best thing in the November *Strange Adventures* was the letter column, but, while you're the editor, I would like to take exception to one remark of yours. You compare letters to the editor to school papers. There is a big difference, mainly the average student is required to write roughly two themes each month, while each and every month almost fifty science-fiction comics hit the stands, most of which have letter columns.

I'm a completest, as are many comic fans, and try to write at least a short note to all of them. Certainly the paper written on should be clean, the hand-writing neat, and the writing clear and interesting, but to bring them up to school quality, no mis-spelling, no crossouts, no sentence fragments, and perfect grammar would not only make it an impossible amount of work . . . it is that already . . . but would take the fun out of it.

Rick Wood,
Bellingrath, Southwestern, Memphis 12, Tenn.
(*We don't see your viewpoint at all. It should take no effort—at least no* extraordinary *effort—always to write grammatically, spell correctly, avoid crossouts, etc. If you're going to take the easy way out by dashing off an occasional "sloppy" (yes, that's what it is) letter, you'll find it becoming* habit-forming *and then it'll be too late to change!*—Editor)

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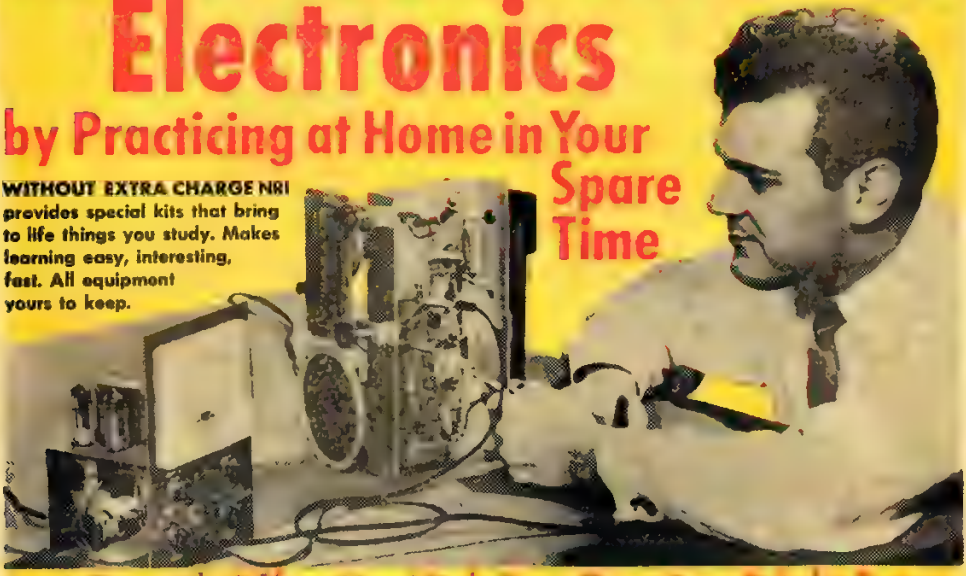

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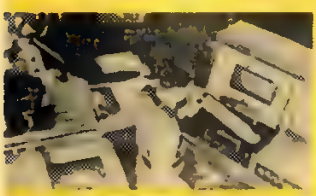

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The Atomic Knights

# THE PLANT THAT HATED HUMANS

PART 2

ON THEIR WAY BACK TO *DURVALE* WITH THE WOUNDED HENDERSON, THE TWO ARMORED CAVALIERS, WAYNE AND HOLLIS HOBARD, DISCOVER A HOST OF THE INCREDIBLE *TREFOIL* CREATURES BLOCKING THEIR PATH, AND AT ONCE IN TRUE *ATOMIC KNIGHTS* FASHION MOVE TO THE *ATTACK*...!

KEEP GOING, HOLLIS! WE'VE GOT TO GET PAST THESE HOSTILE PLANTS -- IN ORDER TO REACH *DURVALE!*

HANG ON TIGHT, MR. HENDERSON! AND DON'T WORRY -- WE'LL GET YOU THROUGH ALL RIGHT!

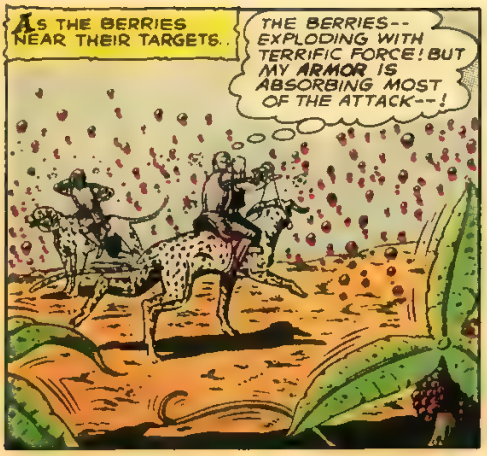
IN A MOMENTARY LULL IN THE BATTLE, AS THE WARRIOR-PLANTS REGROUP FOR ANOTHER ATTACK...

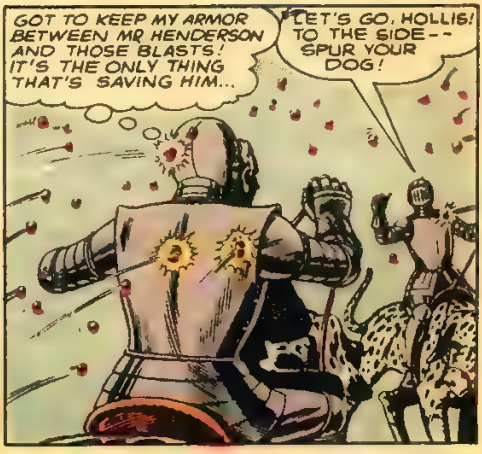
THEY'RE LIKE AN ARMY, WAYNE! EXCEPT THEY HAVE *NO WEAPONS* --!

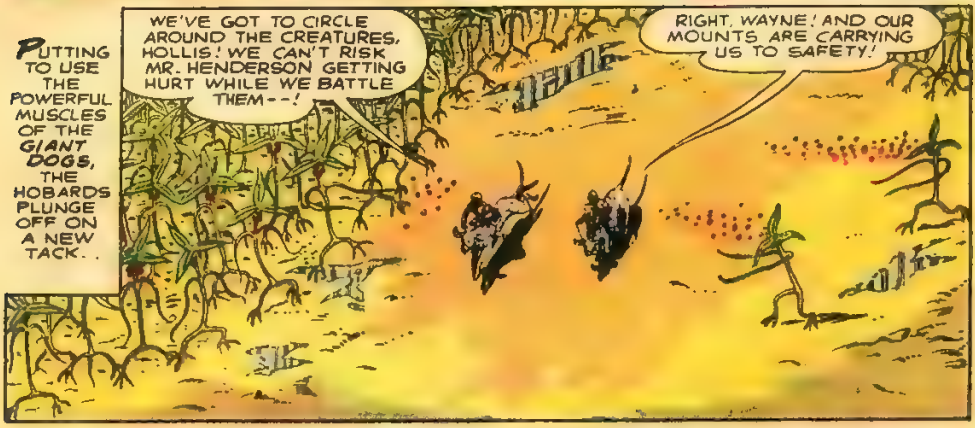
I WOULDN'T BE TOO SURE OF THAT, HOLLIS! THEY'RE UP TO SOMETHING NOW --!

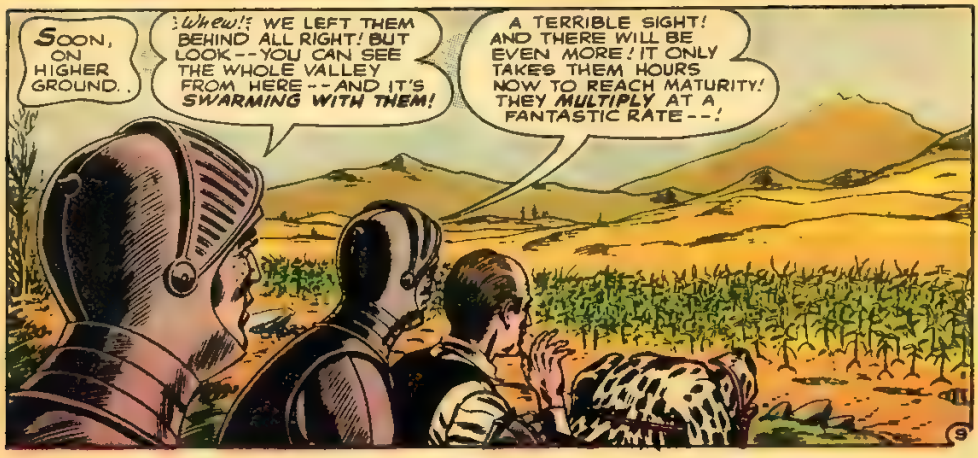
THOSE BRIGHT-RED BERRIES ON THEM -- THEY'RE *SHOOTING THEM AT US!*

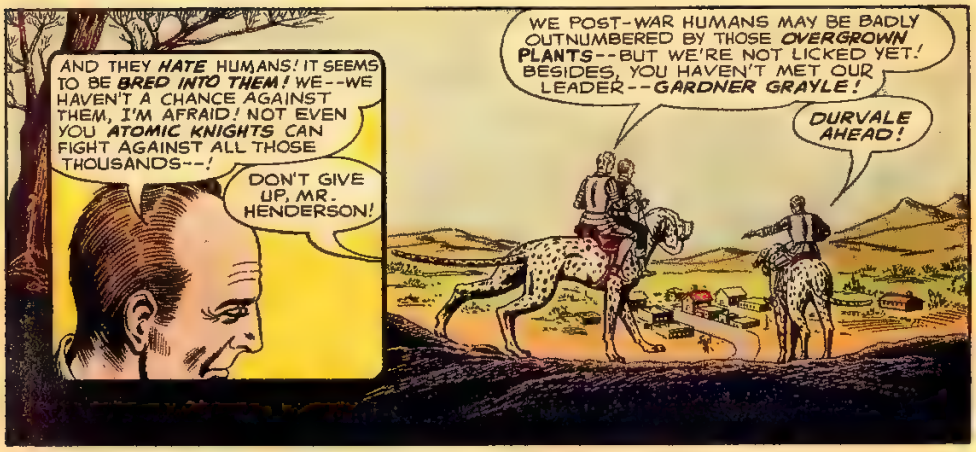
LOOK OUT NOW! LOOK OUT --!

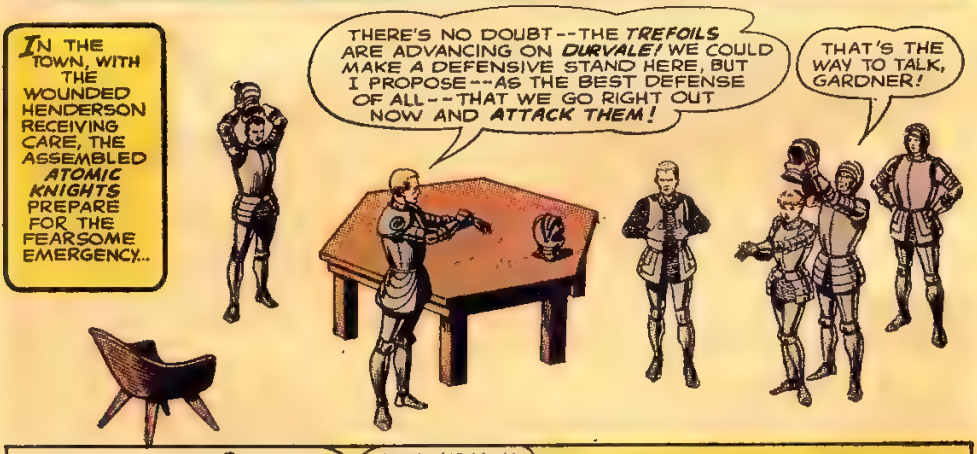

AS THE BERRIES NEAR THEIR TARGETS..
THE BERRIES--EXPLODING WITH TERRIFIC FORCE! BUT MY ARMOR IS ABSORBING MOST OF THE ATTACK--!


GOT TO KEEP MY ARMOR BETWEEN MR HENDERSON AND THOSE BLASTS! IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT'S SAVING HIM...
LET'S GO, HOLLIS! TO THE SIDE--SPUR YOUR DOG!


PUTTING TO USE THE POWERFUL MUSCLES OF THE GIANT DOGS, THE HOBARDS PLUNGE OFF ON A NEW TACK..
WE'VE GOT TO CIRCLE AROUND THE CREATURES, HOLLIS! WE CAN'T RISK MR. HENDERSON GETTING HURT WHILE WE BATTLE THEM--!
RIGHT, WAYNE! AND OUR MOUNTS ARE CARRYING US TO SAFETY!

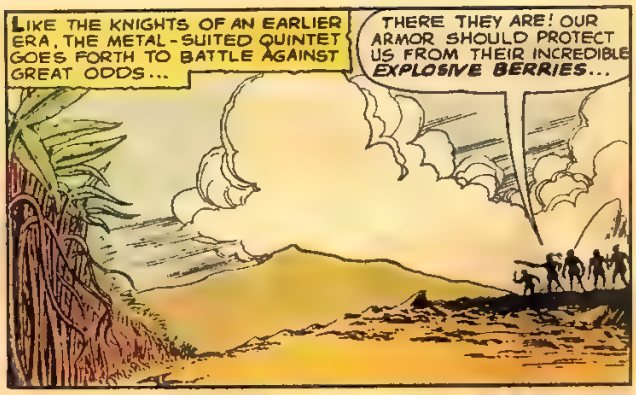

SOON, ON HIGHER GROUND..
Whew!: WE LEFT THEM BEHIND ALL RIGHT! BUT LOOK--YOU CAN SEE THE WHOLE VALLEY FROM HERE--AND IT'S SWARMING WITH THEM!
A TERRIBLE SIGHT! AND THERE WILL BE EVEN MORE! IT ONLY TAKES THEM HOURS NOW TO REACH MATURITY! THEY MULTIPLY AT A FANTASTIC RATE--!

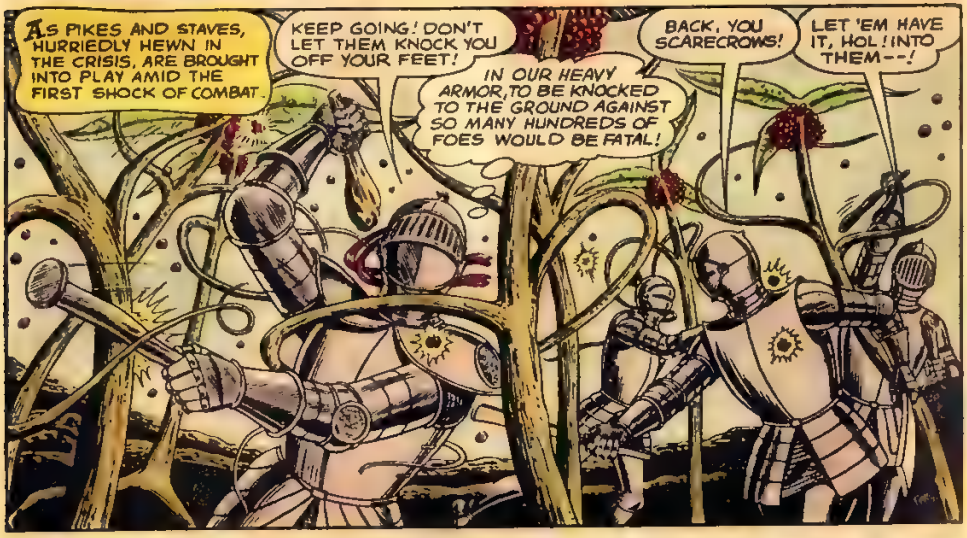

AND THEY HATE HUMANS! IT SEEMS TO BE BRED INTO THEM! WE--WE HAVEN'T A CHANCE AGAINST THEM, I'M AFRAID! NOT EVEN YOU ATOMIC KNIGHTS CAN FIGHT AGAINST ALL THOSE THOUSANDS--!
DON'T GIVE UP, MR. HENDERSON!
WE POST-WAR HUMANS MAY BE BADLY OUTNUMBERED BY THOSE OVERGROWN PLANTS--BUT WE'RE NOT LICKED YET! BESIDES, YOU HAVEN'T MET OUR LEADER--GARDNER GRAYLE!
DURVALE AHEAD!

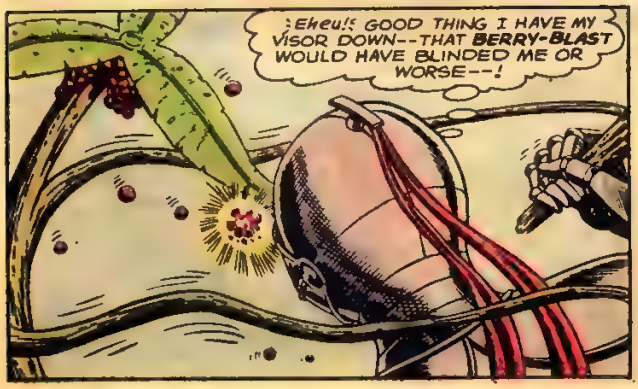

IN THE TOWN, WITH THE WOUNDED HENDERSON RECEIVING CARE, THE ASSEMBLED ATOMIC KNIGHTS PREPARE FOR THE FEARSOME EMERGENCY...
THERE'S NO DOUBT--THE TREFOILS ARE ADVANCING ON DURVALE! WE COULD MAKE A DEFENSIVE STAND HERE, BUT I PROPOSE--AS THE BEST DEFENSE OF ALL--THAT WE GO RIGHT OUT NOW AND ATTACK THEM!
THAT'S THE WAY TO TALK, GARDNER!

THEN WE ALL AGREE? GOOD! BUT ONE POINT--ACCORDING TO REPORTS, THE CONCENTRATION OF THE CREATURES IS ENTIRELY ON THE EAST SIDE OF DURVALE RIVER! ISN'T THAT SO, WAYNE?
RIGHT! THAT'S WHERE WE RAN INTO THEM!
I SEE WHAT YOU'RE GETTING AT, GARDNER! IT IS CURIOUS! WHY SHOULD THE TREFOILS ALL BE ON ONE SIDE OF THE RIVER?
EXACTLY, BRYNDON! IT'S ODD--BUT WE HAVE NO TIME NOW TO PUZZLE OVER THE FACT ANY FURTHER...

THE TIME HAS COME FOR ACTION! AS USUAL, MARENE, YOU'LL BE IN CHARGE OF THE REAR-GUARD FORCES HERE IN DURVALE!
GO--BUT COME BACK TO ME AS SOON AS YOU CAN, GARDNER!

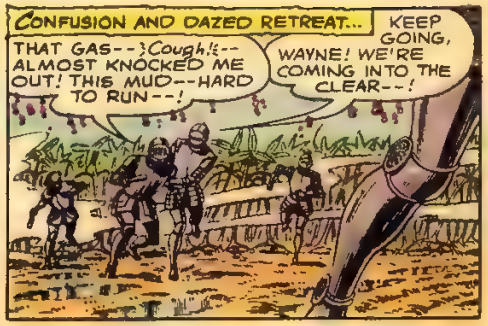

LIKE THE KNIGHTS OF AN EARLIER ERA, THE METAL-SUITED QUINTET GOES FORTH TO BATTLE AGAINST GREAT ODDS...
THERE THEY ARE! OUR ARMOR SHOULD PROTECT US FROM THEIR INCREDIBLE EXPLOSIVE BERRIES...

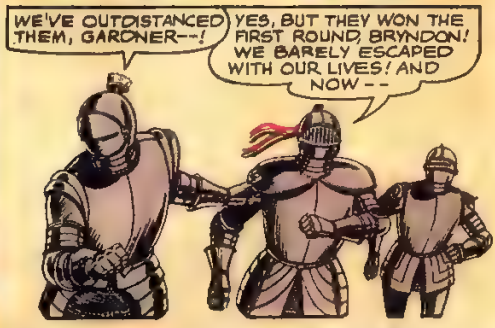

AS PIKES AND STAVES, HURRIEDLY HEWN IN THE CRISIS, ARE BROUGHT INTO PLAY AMID THE FIRST SHOCK OF COMBAT.
KEEP GOING! DON'T LET THEM KNOCK YOU OFF YOUR FEET!
IN OUR HEAVY ARMOR, TO BE KNOCKED TO THE GROUND AGAINST SO MANY HUNDREDS OF FOES WOULD BE FATAL!
BACK, YOU SCARECROWS!
LET 'EM HAVE IT, HOL! INTO THEM--!

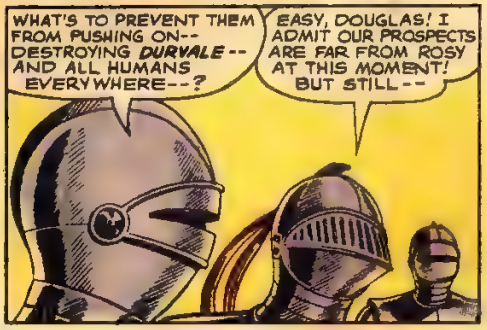

Eheu!: GOOD THING I HAVE MY VISOR DOWN--THAT BERRY-BLAST WOULD HAVE BLINDED ME OR WORSE--!

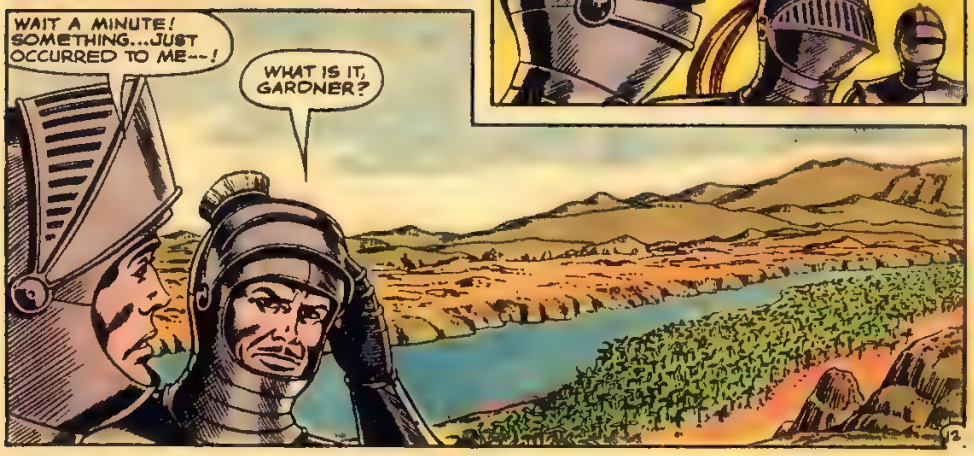
GUESS I SPIKED THAT ONE'S GUNS! IT WON'T BE IN ACTION AGAIN--!

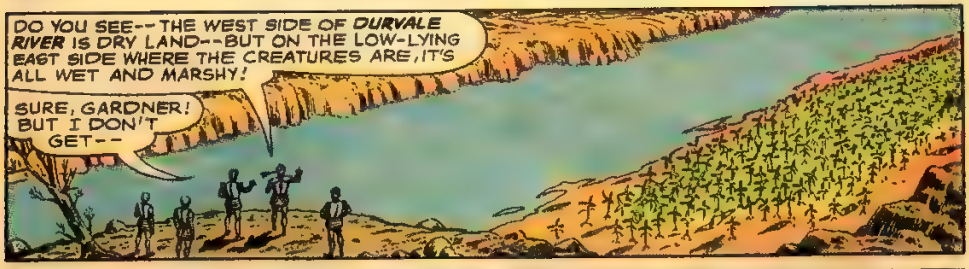
AS A NEW FACTOR SUDDENLY ALTERS THE TENSE SITUATION...
GAS!--CHOKE!--SOME OF THE BERRIES ARE--GASP!--SHOOTING OUT A POISONOUS GAS AS THEY EXPLODE--!
BACK! OUR ARMOR WON'T HELP US AGAINST GAS--!


CONFUSION AND DAZED RETREAT...
THAT GAS--Cough!--ALMOST KNOCKED ME OUT! THIS MUD--HARD TO RUN--!
KEEP GOING, WAYNE! WE'RE COMING INTO THE CLEAR--!


WE'VE OUTDISTANCED THEM, GARDNER--!
YES, BUT THEY WON THE FIRST ROUND, BRYNDON! WE BARELY ESCAPED WITH OUR LIVES! AND NOW--

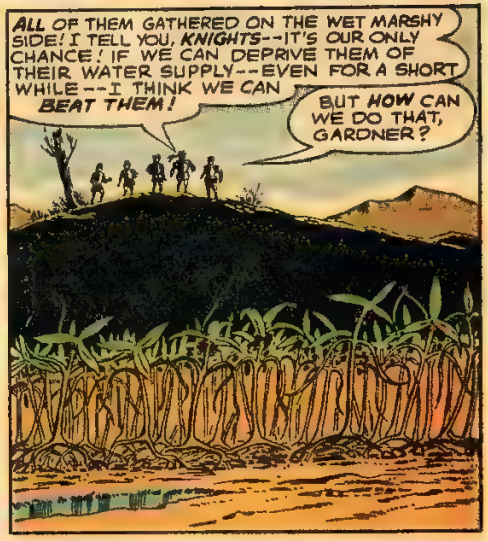

WHAT'S TO PREVENT THEM FROM PUSHING ON--DESTROYING DURVALE--AND ALL HUMANS EVERYWHERE--?
EASY, DOUGLAS! I ADMIT OUR PROSPECTS ARE FAR FROM ROSY AT THIS MOMENT! BUT STILL--


WAIT A MINUTE! SOMETHING...JUST OCCURRED TO ME--!
WHAT IS IT, GARDNER?

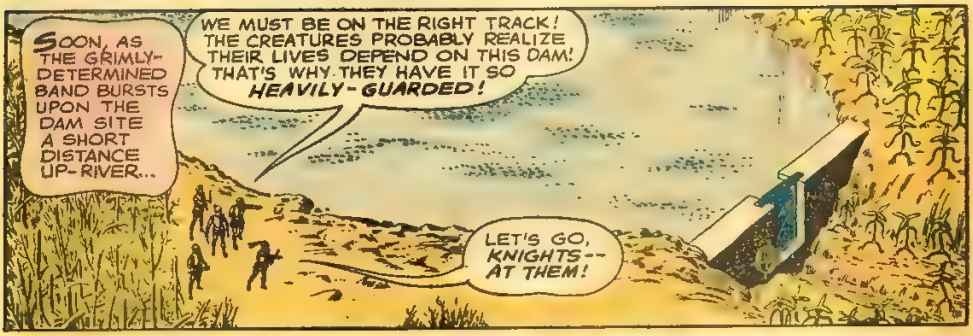

DO YOU SEE--THE WEST SIDE OF DURVALE RIVER IS DRY LAND--BUT ON THE LOW-LYING EAST SIDE WHERE THE CREATURES ARE, IT'S ALL WET AND MARSHY!
SURE, GARDNER! BUT I DON'T GET--

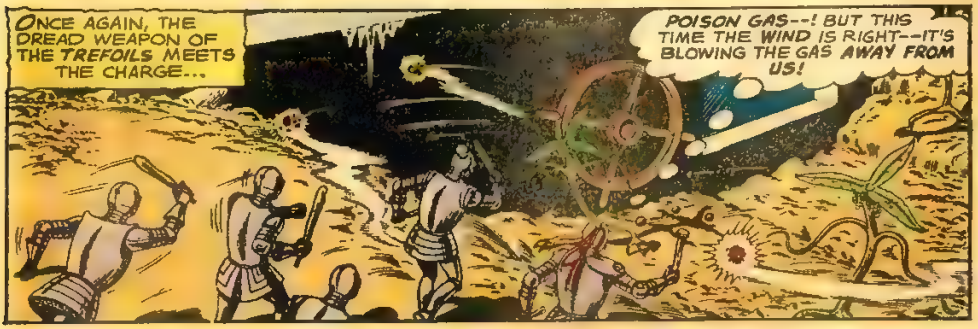
WATER, DOUGLAS--WATER!! THAT MAY BE OUR SECRET WEAPON AGAINST THE TREFOILS! LISTEN--IT'S JUST POSSIBLE THOSE CREATURES NEED WATER THE WAY WE HUMANS NEED AIR--CONSTANTLY--AND IN ABUNDANT AMOUNTS!
HM? YOU MAY HAVE SOMETHING THERE, GARDNER!

I REMEMBER HENDERSON TOLD ME WHEN HE FIRST GREW THE TREFOILS, THEY USED MORE WATER THAN ANY PLANTS HE'D EVER RAISED!
THAT FITS! AND NOW LOOK--NOT A SINGLE ONE OF THEM ON THE DRY WEST SIDE OF THE RIVER--!

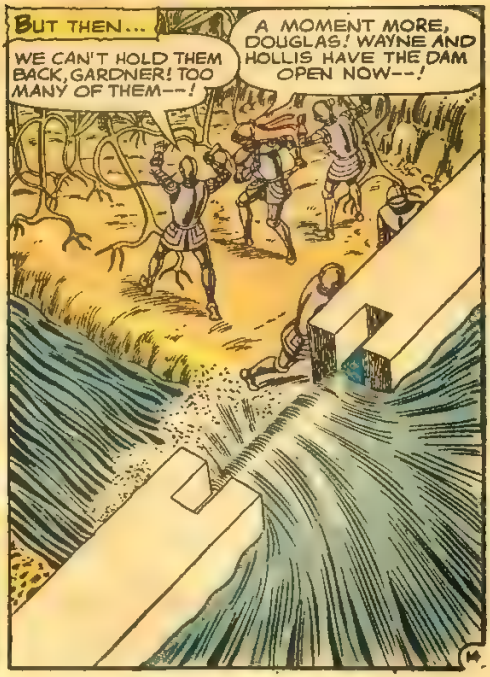

ALL OF THEM GATHERED ON THE WET MARSHY SIDE! I TELL YOU, KNIGHTS--IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE! IF WE CAN DEPRIVE THEM OF THEIR WATER SUPPLY--EVEN FOR A SHORT WHILE--I THINK WE CAN BEAT THEM!
BUT HOW CAN WE DO THAT, GARDNER?

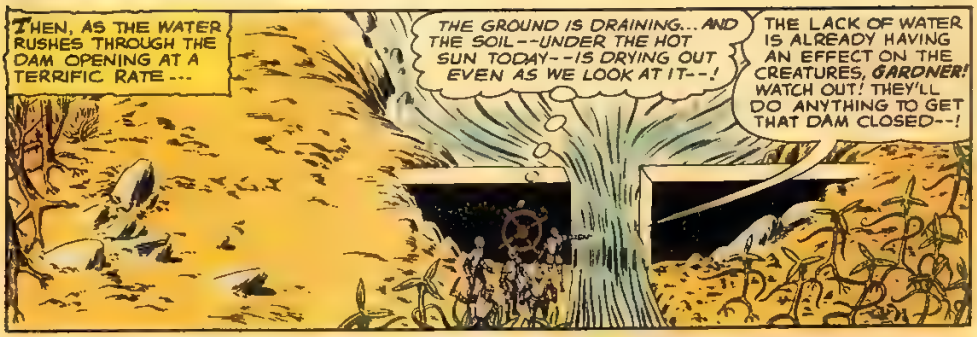
I HAVE AN IDEA! I KNOW THIS COUNTRY--HOLLIS AND I GREW UP HERE! THIS SOIL IS MARSHY BECAUSE THERE'S AN OLD IRRIGATION DAM UP-RIVER THAT PREVENTS THE GROUND FROM DRAINING! NOW IF THAT DAM WERE OPENED, IT WOULD CHANGE THE COURSE OF DURVALE RIVER AND--
WAYNE, SHOW US WHERE THAT DAM IS! HURRY--!


SOON, AS THE GRIMLY-DETERMINED BAND BURSTS UPON THE DAM SITE A SHORT DISTANCE UP-RIVER...
WE MUST BE ON THE RIGHT TRACK! THE CREATURES PROBABLY REALIZE THEIR LIVES DEPEND ON THIS DAM! THAT'S WHY THEY HAVE IT SO HEAVILY-GUARDED!
LET'S GO, KNIGHTS--AT THEM!


ONCE AGAIN, THE DREAD WEAPON OF THE TREFOILS MEETS THE CHARGE...
POISON GAS--! BUT THIS TIME THE WIND IS RIGHT--IT'S BLOWING THE GAS AWAY FROM US!

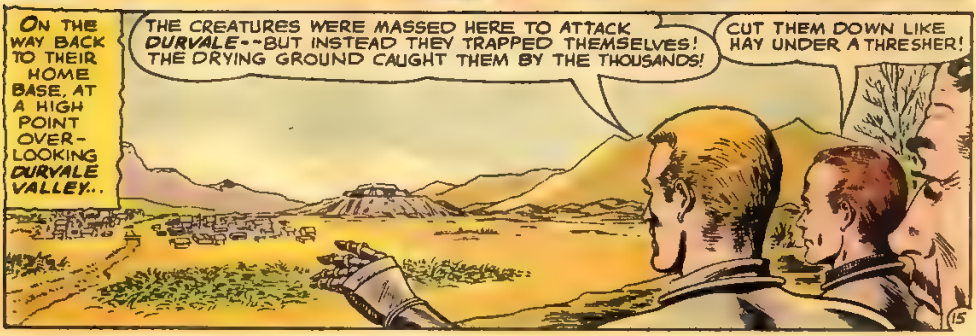
WHILE GARDNER, BRYNDON AND DOUGLAS MAKE A FRONTAL ASSAULT, THE HOBARD BOYS REACH THE GREAT WHEEL CONTROLLING THE DAM...
YIPE! THIS DAM AIN'T BEEN OPENED IN YEARS!
HARDER, HOLLIS! WE'VE GOT TO DO IT--!
KEEP THEM GOING BACK, BRYNDON! HIT THEM, DOUGLAS!


BUT THEN...
WE CAN'T HOLD THEM BACK, GARDNER! TOO MANY OF THEM--!
A MOMENT MORE, DOUGLAS! WAYNE AND HOLLIS HAVE THE DAM OPEN NOW--!


THEN, AS THE WATER RUSHES THROUGH THE DAM OPENING AT A TERRIFIC RATE ---
THE GROUND IS DRAINING... AND THE SOIL--UNDER THE HOT SUN TODAY--IS DRYING OUT EVEN AS WE LOOK AT IT--!
THE LACK OF WATER IS ALREADY HAVING AN EFFECT ON THE CREATURES, GARDNER! WATCH OUT! THEY'LL DO ANYTHING TO GET THAT DAM CLOSED--!

OUR MOTTO IS-- THEY SHALL NOT PASS!
THEY'RE WEAKENING--!
STAND FIRM, KNIGHTS! WE'VE GOT THEM LICKED--!

AND THEN...
GARDNER, LOOK!
WATER IS LIKE AIR TO THEM, BRYNDON! EVEN A FEW MINUTES WITHOUT IT IS ENOUGH TO DESTROY THEM! WE'VE WON!


ON THE WAY BACK TO THEIR HOME BASE, AT A HIGH POINT OVER-LOOKING DURVALE VALLEY...
THE CREATURES WERE MASSED HERE TO ATTACK DURVALE--BUT INSTEAD THEY TRAPPED THEMSELVES! THE DRYING GROUND CAUGHT THEM BY THE THOUSANDS!
CUT THEM DOWN LIKE HAY UNDER A THRESHER!

LATER, WITH ONE MORE DETAIL TAKEN CARE OF BY THE ENERGETIC BAND...

THAT'S FINE, DOUGLAS! YOU DID A SWELL JOB OF PRINTING UP THESE POSTERS--WITH YOUR HOME-MADE EQUIPMENT!

WARNING! BEWARE THIS PLANT! THE BIRDS-FOOT TREFOIL IS AN ENEMY OF HUMANS AND MUST BE DESTROYED ON SIGHT!

HOLLIS AND WAYNE, YOU'LL DISTRIBUTE THEM--AS WIDELY AS POSSIBLE! HUMANS ALL OVER MUST BE PUT ON THEIR GUARD AGAINST ANY *TREFOILS* THEY MAY SEE GROWING ANYWHERE--!

CHECK, GARDNER! LET'S GO, WAYNE!

WITH PEACE ONCE MORE RESTORED IN *DURVALE* AND INVENTOR HENDERSON ON HIS FEET ONCE AGAIN...

I'VE FIGURED OUT, GARDNER--IT WAS A *BAD* MUTANT STRAIN OF THE *TREFOILS* WE HAD TROUBLE WITH! WHAT IF I COULD GROW A *GOOD STRAIN* OF THE SAME PLANT? THEN WE COULD STILL USE THEM TO REBUILD...

INTERESTING! GO AHEAD ON THAT ANGLE, HENDERSON--BUT BE CAREFUL!

HOW WONDERFUL IT IS TO HAVE GARDNER HERE...CLOSE TO ME AGAIN!

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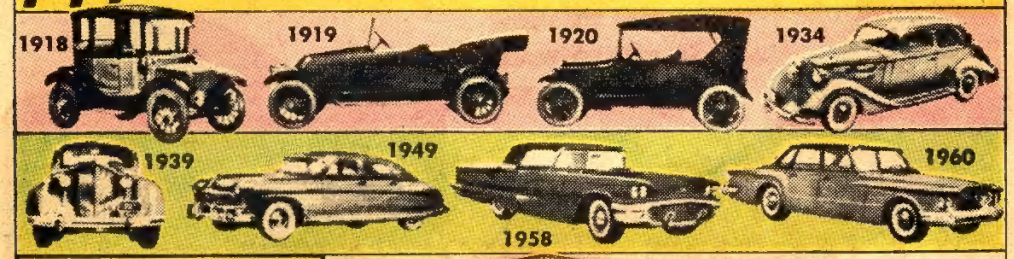


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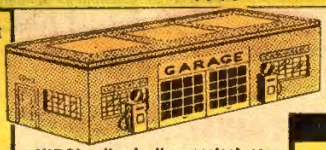


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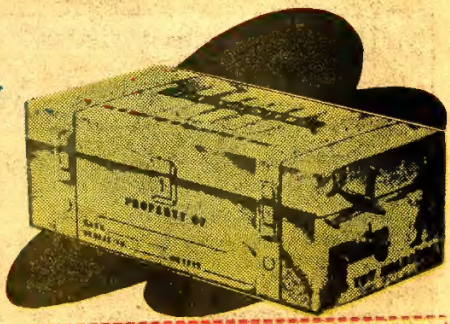

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Canada and foreign orders send $1.50 postal money order.

**JOIN THE ORIGINAL J.S.C.A. Get Your Prizes this Fast, Easy Way!**

It's easy to earn these valuable prizes when you become a member of Junior Sales Club. Cards are sent to you on credit. YOU DO NOT PAY IN ADVANCE! Selling these lovely All Occasion Cards is amazingly easy. *You sell each box of 21 beautiful cards for the low price of only $1.25.* All your friends, relatives and neighbors will be delighted with such fine cards at such a reasonable price. Many members have earned a prize in only a few hours. IF YOU WISH, YOU MAY KEEP AS YOUR PRIZE, 50¢ FOR EACH BOX YOU SELL. The first thing to do is pick out the prize you want. Then simply fill out the reply card with your name and address and mail it in. We will immediately send you 12 boxes of cards. (If prize requires more than 12 boxes, start off with 12 boxes.) We send your cards on credit because we trust you. You have 30 days to sell your cards. All we ask is that you return prepaid by Parcel Post any boxes you cannot sell within 30 days, keeping 50¢ for each box you do sell. That's all there is to it! The J.S.C.A. Club Plan is quick and easy! MAIL YOUR COUPON NOW!

*You Can Get This* OFFICIAL J.S.C.A. BADGE

**Junior Sales Club of America**
SPRINGFIELD 1, MASS.

**JOIN J.S.C.A. --- MAIL COUPON TODAY!**

**JUNIOR SALES CLUB OF AMERICA**
**SPRINGFIELD 1, MASS. DEPT. NC-1**

Enroll me as a member of the J.S.C.A. and send me AT ONCE FREE Membership Card, FREE Prize Catalog, complete details on how to get valuable prizes plus a supply of 12 All Occasion Card boxes to sell.

MY NAME ..... *Print Clearly*
ADDRESS .....
CITY ..... ZONE ... STATE .....
PARENT'S SIGNATURE .....

Complete Fishing Outfit

Movie Projector

Berwin Typewriter

Flash Camera Outfit

Wrist Watches

4 Daisy Air Rifles

Girls Travel Case

Croquet Set

Mickey Mantle Glove

Sleeping Bag

Full String Guitar

Complete Archery Set

Transistor Radios

Chemistry Set

3-Speed Bicycle

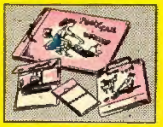
Basketball & Goal

Walkie-Talkie

Big 3 Camping Set

Skin Diving Swim Set

Pool Table Set


Diary, Wallet, Photo Album

Roger Maris Home Run Trainer

"I sell American Seeds every year."
**Joel Bellenger**
**Washington**

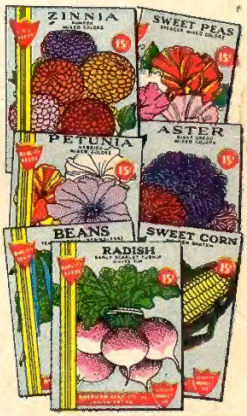
"It's an easy way to get money and prizes."
**Mary Zimmerman**
**Wisconsin**

"They sell as fast as I can show them."
**William Hanlin**
**Missouri**

"I sold 240 packs in one hour and a half."
**Desmond Meacham**
**New York**

# MAKE MONEY
# GET PRIZES
## with Fast Selling American Seeds

Take your choice of these wonderful prizes. They can be yours—quickly, easily. Most prizes shown here and many more in our Big Prize Book are given WITHOUT COST for selling just one 50-pack order of American Vegetable and Flower Seeds at 15c a pack. Some of the larger prizes require more sales or extra money as explained in the Big Prize Book.




**Send NO MONEY, We Trust You**

Everybody wants American Seeds. They're fresh and ready to grow. You'll sell them quickly to family, friends and neighbors. Many boys and girls sell their packs in one day. You can too—and get your prize at once. Or, if you want money instead of a prize, keep $2.50 for every 50-pack order you sell. Mail coupon today for your first order of American Seeds and Big Prize Book—give the other coupon to a friend.

**AMERICAN SEED CO.**
**Dept. 302**
**Lancaster, Pa.**
**OUR 45th YEAR**

**MAIL ONE COUPON TODAY**
**Give the Other to a Friend**

**AMERICAN SEED CO., Dept. 302, Lancaster, Pa.**

Please send me your Big Prize Book and one order of 50 packs of American Seeds. I'll sell them at 15c a pack, send you the money and choose my prize. Send seeds checked.

☐ All Flower Seeds ☐ Mixed Vegetable and Flower Seeds

Name_____

Address_____

Town_____ State_____

**AMERICAN SEED CO., Dept. 302, Lancaster, Pa.**

Please send me your Big Prize Book and one order of 50 packs of American Seeds. I'll sell them at 15c a pack, send you the money and choose my prize. Send seeds checked.

☐ All Flower Seeds ☐ Mixed Vegetable and Flower Seeds

Name_____

Address_____

Town_____ State_____